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Official Records

26th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 7 October 2003, 3 p.m.
New York

President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Kirn (Slovenia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 124 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

The Acting President: Before we turn to the items on the agenda for this afternoon, I should like to inform members that since the issue of documents A/58/360 and Add.1, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of that information?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: That information will be reflected in document A/58/360/Add.2, to be issued tomorrow morning.

Agenda items 60 and 10 *(continued)*

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Report of the Secretary-General (A/58/323)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/58/1)

Mr. Rodríguez Parilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Millennium Declaration states, "We ... have gathered ... to reaffirm our faith in the Organization and its Charter as indispensable foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world" (*resolution 55/2, para. 1*). It continues, "We have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level" (*para. 2*), and declares, "We reaffirm our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which have proved timeless and universal" (*para. 3*).

The illegal war in Iraq has made everything more clear. In similar times, in 1999, in the Assembly Hall, the Cuban delegation said that

> "under conditions of a unipolar and neo-liberal world order; under the economic and military dictatorship of a super-Power; and given the imposition of a single model, the nuclear club, the offensive military doctrine of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the so-called global threats, countries being relegated to the 'Euro-Atlantic periphery', the financial blackmail against the United Nations, the tyranny of some permanent members of the Security Council and the Council's double standards; the crippling of the General Assembly; and the ways that political selectivity and manipulation applied to human rights issues — in view of all this, it would be

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suicidal to endorse the right to global intervention ..." (*A/54/PV.32, p. 2*).

Two wars later, it is obvious that the system of international security constructed after the Second World War, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and reflected in the Millennium Declaration, has been permanently destroyed.

In addition, there are now even more dangerous concepts: the "Nuclear Posture Review" — the review of the national security doctrine of the United States; that country's announcement that it is willing to act against threats emanating from the territories of more than 60 countries; our countries of the third world being labelled "obscure corners of the planet"; the defining of so-called new threats and combinations of threats — new forms of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; so-called armed and unarmed threats; and the preventive use of force, including on the territory of other States.

There is no doubt that the world today is more dangerous and less secure that it was in 1999 or other years before the criminal acts of 11 September 2001. There is no doubt that the United Nations has become more irrelevant, that some seek to declare the United Nations Charter obsolete and that a de facto world dictatorship based on the use of force is being established.

As is well known, Cuba's position is that the system of collective security, regulated in the Charter and governed by the central role of the United Nations, must be restored, not discarded. The General Assembly must now reaffirm, as it did in the Millennium Declaration, the full validity of the Charter, whose purposes and principles, including the principles of the sovereign equality of States, respect for the political independence of nations and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, must be applied without restriction.

It should be reiterated that States must refrain from the use of force and threatening to use force and in every case, must strictly abide by the provisions of the Charter and serve only the common interest. We should defend multilateralism, which presupposes full respect for international law and democracy in international relations.

The Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security must be restored with full respect for the United Nations Charter. There must be profound reform of its procedures, including the use of the veto, and an expansion of its membership, among both permanent and non-permanent members.

The General Assembly must resume its broad powers under the Charter, including those derived from paralysis of the Security Council, to reject the use of force to achieve political objectives and to emphasize that only peaceful settlement of disputes can lead to security, stability, justice and democracy throughout the world.

The Millennium Declaration must be implemented to the fullest extent concerning the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, in order to reduce the part they play in security doctrines and policies, and to halt their development and stockpiling. We must also refrain from developing new highly lethal conventional weapons and from the militarization of outer space.

As for the Millennium proposals and challenges, the blockade against Cuba has been strengthened, and its extraterritorial effects have expanded. The manipulation of Cuban purchases of foodstuffs from the United States to show that the blockade has been partially lifted has done nothing but show the genocidal nature of this blockade, which three years after the Millennium Summit still includes medicine and food.

As stated in the Millennium Declaration,

> "only through broad and sustained efforts to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity, can globalization be made fully inclusive and equitable. These efforts must include policies and measures, at the global level, which correspond to the needs of developing countries ...". (*resolution 55/2, para. 5*)

It further states that "We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty ..." (*para. 11*).

The meagre — still unfulfilled — commitments and numerous conditionalities adopted at Monterrey, the empty promises of Doha and the recent failure in Cancún do not seem to be in keeping with the aforementioned appeal. For every miserable dollar of official development assistance, six dollars of debt service is extracted from a debt that continues to grow.

The gap between the North and the South has widened, and the digital divide is growing as well.

No group of States, whether rich or poor, will be more secure in a world where 800 million people go hungry, where 1.2 billion live on less than a dollar per day and where 115 million children, three fifths of them girls, do not have access to education. There are 876 million people in the world who are illiterate, two thirds of whom are female. More than 11 million children die each year from preventable diseases, and more than 500,000 women a year die in pregnancy or in childbirth. Of the 42 million people who suffer from HIV/AIDS, 39 million are from the developing world. Tuberculosis and malaria cause 3 million deaths each year; one out of every five individuals does not have access to drinking water; and 2.4 billion human beings do not have proper sanitary facilities. Is this the Millennium Declaration's international partnership for development?

Africa needs financing from the former colonial Powers, not prescriptions or advice. There will be no peace, security or stability without development. There will not even be any prosperity for the affluent societies if there is no development in the countries of the South.

Under the unjust, exclusive and unsustainable international order that afflicts us, with an international financial architecture that aids in the plundering of our countries, the Millennium Goals are pure fantasy.

Solutions are feasible. The debt, which has been repaid many times over, should be cancelled. The promise to devote 0.7 per cent of gross national product to official development assistance must be kept. Resources must be made available from the sale of arms, from speculative financial transactions and from advertising in order to meet the overwhelming needs of the developing countries. Agricultural subsidies in the countries of the North must end. Monopolization of the intellectual property of medical resources essential to life must end.

What has happened with the Kyoto Protocol on climate change? What progress has been made since the World Summit on Sustainable Development took place in Johannesburg? Deterioration of the environment associated with irrational consumption by the industrialized countries means that the rich and the poor will be left with a common fate.

In the Millennium Declaration we promised that

> "We will spare no effort to promote democracy and strengthen the rule of law, as well as respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development." (*para. 24*)

The General Assembly must appeal for cooperation and constructive dialogue to promote and protect all human rights, which are indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and should be enjoyed by all individuals and peoples. It should undertake concrete action to find peaceful solutions to international humanitarian problems, in strict compliance with the principles and norms of international law and international humanitarian law.

The politicization of human rights is nothing new in the proceedings of the Commission on Human Rights. It is unfair to criticize the developing countries for defending their concepts, rights or legitimate interests. Politicization was imposed long ago by the developed countries which, as a bloc, promoted double standards, selective approaches and unequal treatment on the basis of their political agendas, their narrow national interests, and sometimes even because of the foreign demands that most of them have themselves endured.

Industrialized countries that are truly interested in fruitful dialogue and in settling disputes and problems in the area of human rights by means of cooperation, as called for in the Millennium Declaration, must understand that those who support hegemony will also affect their own interests.

The treatment of the subject of human rights in the section of the report of the Secretary-General on peace and security, specifically with regard to sanctions, seems to acknowledge that the Security Council exercises functions that in fact belong to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and absolutely not to the Security Council.

Democracy and civil and political rights have also fallen victim to the so-called global war against terrorism. In addition to the crisis in the political system, the lack of credibility of politicians and abstention in elections in industrialized countries, there is now irrefutable data on the manipulation of information and public opinion and on the exclusion of citizens from the decision-making process in Governments that supposedly represent them.

The Cuban delegation supports the proposal to organize a United Nations conference in 2005 to review in full the implementation of the commitments made in the Millennium Declaration, in the hope that this would be a second opportunity to fulfil the Goals.

Ms. Enkhtsetseg (Mongolia): My delegation wishes to commend the Secretary-General on his thought-provoking reports on implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (A/58/323) and on the work of the Organization (A/58/1). Mongolia associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

As seen in the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the Millennium Declaration (A/58/323), the results of the first three years have been mixed and uneven. For every goal, whether relating to peace and security, to development or to human rights and democracy, there are encouraging signs of progress in some areas along with worrying evidence of stagnation or even reversal in others. But one of the important conclusions we can all draw from the report is that the Millennium Development Goals, as ambitious as they are, can still be achieved at both national and global levels if there is sufficient political will. There is, therefore, a clear need for political leaders to sustain the current momentum in order to avoid setbacks and accelerate progress in the coming years.

The crucial importance of forging strategic partnerships at both national and international levels and of active participation by all stakeholders in implementing the Millennium Development Goals was strongly highlighted at the Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held last month in the capital city of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar. One of the three thematic sessions of the conference, which was attended by the representatives of 119 Governments and a host of international organizations and civil society organizations, was held under the sub-theme of "Partnership and participation in poverty reduction and attainment of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals". The main conclusions and findings of the thematic session have been reflected in the final outcome documents; the Ulaanbaatar Declaration and Plan of Action on Democracy, Good Governance and Civil Society. The detailed report on the result of this conference and its follow-up will be delivered to the General Assembly by my Government early next month, when the Assembly considers the relevant agenda item.

National reports on the Millennium Development Goals, in our view, serve as an important tool in measuring progress made and ensuring that the Millennium Development Goals remain at the heart of development efforts. It is encouraging that around 40 countries have completed their national Millennium Development Goals reports and that an additional 60 reports are expected by the end of this year. I am pleased to inform the General Assembly that the Government of Mongolia is being actively engaged in finalizing its first Millennium Development Goals report.

In preparing its national Millennium Development Goals report, my Government has undertaken a series of preparatory activities over the past two years. In 2001, when we observed the fortieth anniversary of Mongolia's membership of the United Nations, a joint conference was organized under the theme of "Forty years of Mongolia-United Nations cooperation: Implementation of the Millennium Declaration," the main findings of which were subsequently included in my Government's memorandum submitted at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

In June 2002 we set up a national task force on the Millennium Development Goals composed of key ministries, the National Statistical Office, academia and civil society organizations, and entrusted with task of tailoring the Millennium Development Goals to the national context, improving the statistical database and the system of evaluation and monitoring of progress and drafting the report through a broad-based consultative process. The first draft of the report was extensively discussed at a national consultative meeting held last August among all the stakeholders, including our bilateral and multilateral partners, civil society and the private sector. The views expressed at the meeting and its conclusions have been incorporated into the report.

The report contains overall information on the current status and measures undertaken by the Government to implement the eight Development Goals and the 16 targets. It also outlines the major challenges, obstacles and priorities for future activities and development assistance under each Goal. The Government of Mongolia has made poverty reduction its key priority, committing itself to the Millennium Development Goal target of halving absolute poverty

by 2015. Further, it has pledged to meet the poverty reduction criteria specified in our Poverty Reduction Partnership Agreement with the Asian Development Bank. We have also finalized our Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper emphasizing a private-sector-led growth strategy and increased social spending in the context of macroeconomic stabilization.

The Government adopted a national programme on supporting household livelihood as a second phase of its poverty reduction programme. To effectively reduce poverty, my Government has identified core strategies including the following: ensuring sustained economic growth, addressing urban poverty and disparity, active engagement of local communities and civil society organizations in anti-poverty activities, natural disaster and risk management, and provision of adequate social protection.

My delegation believes that national reports on the Millennium Development Goals will be important in the review of the progress of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals scheduled for 2005. In that respect, we believe that it might be advisable to request Member States to periodically report to the Secretary-General on their national progress, so that a comprehensive picture can be available for review.

Last week and the week before, in the general debate, the heads of our delegations reaffirmed their faith in the United Nations and agreed on the urgent need to take decisive measures so that this world Organization is adequately equipped to effectively address the formidable challenges, both existing and evolving. My delegation fully shares the Secretary-General's view that "Member States need ... to take a hard look at the existing 'architecture' of international institutions" (*A/58/323, para. 91*) and "consider reaching swift agreement on [reform] as a national interest of the highest order" (*para. 98*).

The reform measures in our review ought to include the revitalization of the General Assembly and a rationalization of its agenda, the enlargement and democratization of the Security Council, the reinvigoration of the Economic and Social Council, a review of the interrelationship of the United Nations with the Bretton Woods institutions and a review of the role of the Trusteeship Council in the light of the new responsibilities entrusted upon the world Organization over the recent past.

Mongolia supports the idea of setting the year 2005, when the international community is to review the progress achieved in implementing all the commitments made in the Millennium Declaration, as a target date for reaching agreement on the reform measures. In that regard, my delegation looks forward to receiving the results and recommendations to be developed by the high-level panel of eminent personalities and to actively working with our fellow nations during both the current and upcoming sessions of the General Assembly towards revitalizing the United Nations.

In conclusion, I assure the President of my delegation's full support and cooperation in discharging his onerous task.

Mr. Mubarez (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): The reports of the Secretary-General before the Assembly provide us with many facts on the work of the Organization during the past year, and on follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit. The two reports provide the facts within a context that allows for an assessment of the achievements and a clear vision of the future. We can only commend both reports. We agree with the introduction of the report on the work of the Organization (A/58/1) that this has been a trying year for the United Nations. The war in Iraq has seriously tested the principle of collective security, on which the Organization is based. The Secretary-General expressed that very clearly, along with the general observation that multilateral international action has been undermined by unilateral action on the part of some, which runs counter to the requirements of joint action and collective security.

If the statements to which we have listened thus far accurately reflect international public opinion and international will, the overwhelming majority of United Nations Member States reaffirm the importance of collective work in facing common challenges and of harmonizing national interests, which are daily becoming more complex and intertwined. My country has always been firmly convinced that the best way to meet collective security challenges and the demands of globalization is through multilateral efforts on the part of regional and international organizations, particularly the United Nations.

We have noted with satisfaction the Organization's efforts in the past year in the political, economic and humanitarian areas to implement the

relevant resolutions. However, a lack of consensus has caused peace and security efforts to falter, as the report noted, which in turn has negatively affected international relations — beginning with the tragic events of 11 September 2001 and ending with the occupation of Iraq — in addition to differences of visions, conflicts of interest and hesitation to shoulder the responsibility and demands for collective security and to meet the requirements of peace. All of that has affected the nature of international relations and the credibility and role of the United Nations in particular.

However, the undermining of the Organization, its role and its credibility has not been caused by those events alone. Israel has challenged and damaged international unity and the Organization and international legitimacy for more than four decades with its continued occupation of Arab territories and its coercive actions against their inhabitants, in addition to its continued refusal to subject its nuclear facilities to international monitoring and its repeated aggression against its neighbours, the latest of which was its aggression against Syria. If the terrorist acts suffered by the United States in September 2001 raised awareness of the danger that terrorism poses to collective security, the fight against that scourge has been faltering, with major differences on basic principles. Moreover, the fight against terrorism has addressed only terrorism's manifestations, not its root causes, and it has failed to distinguish between terrorism and the legitimate right of peoples to resist foreign occupation. The Secretary-General warned about that in his report on the work of the Organization when he stated,

> "there is no trade-off between human rights and security: respecting human rights must be a fundamental element in the fight against terrorism. Promoting values of tolerance and the dialogue among civilizations is also of paramount importance." (*A/58/1, para. 63*)

Much important progress has been achieved in the area of respect for human rights, as the report states. However, practical implementation has encountered many difficulties because of the primacy of narrow interests and political considerations over commitments and moral and humanitarian principles. In that regard, we note that in his report on implementation of the Millennium Declaration the Secretary-General stated that "in the area of human rights and democracy there is a danger that we may retreat from some of the important gains made in the previous decade" (*A/58/323, para. 3*). The report also pointed out that the obviously slow pace in implementing the Millennium Development Goals can be attributed to a lack of the clear vision and political will needed to truly improve the lives of people in developing countries. The United Nations remains the principal forum for international action and all countries are aware that there is a need for basic reform in the Organization so it can meet future challenges and adapt to the ever-accelerating changes in international relations.

In that connection, we support the concepts and proposals made since the Millennium Declaration to introduce basic reforms into the Organization. In particular, we welcome the Secretary-General's initiative of establishing a panel of eminent personalities to set out a specific plan for reform aimed at ensuring broad participation representing a wide spectrum of opinion. For our part, we reaffirm our readiness to cooperate with the President of the General Assembly in ensuring that the work of this session provides a real impetus for our common endeavour.

Mr. Lamba (Malawi): This timely and important debate on the follow-up to the Millennium Summit and on the work of the Organization provides an opportunity to assess fulfilment of the declared commitments of Member States. The Millennium Summit, whose outcomes were the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, represented a unique occasion and effort that underlined for us the challenges and goals of creating a world characterized by development, peace and security. To that end, Malawi welcomes the reports of the Secretary-General now before the Assembly.

The Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization in document A/58/1 presents a lucid picture of tasks facing the United Nations and of progress achieved. In this debate, as the report suggested, we must focus our attention on strengthening the Organization by taking a measured assessment of what has happened, reflecting on the sort of Organization we want in the future and beginning to make the necessary changes.

The Millennium Declaration clearly spelled out a development agenda that must be pursued by the United Nations in the fight against poverty and other problems facing the world today. The attainment of the Millennium Development Goals will depend largely on

how much progress we achieve in implementing the outcomes of major United Nations conferences such as the International Conference on Financing for Development, held at Monterrey; the World Summit on Sustainable Development, at Johannesburg; the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, at Brussels; and the World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen. The collapse of the recent World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference at Cancún is a sad commentary on the extent of the North-South partnership.

As indicated in the Millennium Declaration, Africa — the continent most affected by poverty, hunger, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and violent conflicts — requires special attention. Poverty will find its solution in full implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). While the United Nations endorsed NEPAD as the vehicle for promoting Africa's development, that positive step must be matched with a flow of the requisite resources for its implementation. In fact, tangible support for the accomplishment of Africa's development agenda under NEPAD should include trade liberalization and the cancelling of external debt, in addition to achievement of the official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product, in order to eradicate extreme poverty on our continent.

There is no denying that peace and security are prerequisites for any meaningful development. As we deal with the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction and the question of terrorism, let us not lose sight of the devastating impact of small arms and light weapons on global peace and security. The United Nations, working in partnership with Member States, should deal decisively with the question of small arms and light weapons.

Malawi remains committed to the fight against terrorism, as demonstrated by the Government's recent ratification of and accession to four United Nations conventions pertaining to the fight against terrorism. However, while the Government has demonstrated a strong commitment to the fight against terrorism, the effectiveness of actions in that regard hinges on the availability of capacity and resources for the implementation of the conventions. In this regard, we look forward to the support and cooperation of the international community in the fight against terrorism, in particular with regard to the development of capacities and provision of resources for combating the scourge.

Achieving peace and security should be the preponderant concern in any effort geared towards human development in an environment of democracy and human rights. The world continues to witness terrorism, both national and international, as well as civil armed conflicts, all of which have rendered productive life impossible, as people suffer displacement, destitution and deprivation. Global peace and development will always be beyond reach unless Member States show synergy in taking appropriate multilateral measures while respecting justice. Wars are creating food crises and poverty, particularly in Africa, which are threatening peace and security. Malawi welcomes the Secretary-General's strategy of varying the United Nations approach to peace and security so as to include preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building.

The issue of Iraq — both before and after the March 2003 war — has challenged the United Nations immeasurably, making clear the flaws of war as a solution to problems. Just before the war, Malawi affirmed, on behalf of the African Group, the need for resilience and restraint to avert armed conflict, which seemed imminent. At that point, multilateralism had effectively been suspended. The United Nations was turned into a concerned observer. Today, although the field combat in Iraq was declared to be over on 1 May 2003, peace continues to elude every person in Iraq. The recent tragic attack against the United Nations in Baghhad and the death of United Nations staff members, the daily guerrilla activity and the deaths of allied military personnel remind us that, without the leadership of the United Nations, total peace in Iraq will not be an easy to achieve.

In the area of conflict resolution, Malawi pays tribute to the role of the United Nations in the various conflict zones. In Africa, the Organization's visibility in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Horn of Africa has enhanced peace. The same can be said of other parts of the world, as the United Nations works to achieve synergy with regional organizations. However, peacekeeping and peace-building, which characterize the post-conflict period, constitute a delicate phase, requiring the practical goodwill of the whole international community. Malawi's contribution to peacekeeping operations in Africa and elsewhere underlines its solid support for peace and security.

Malawi believes that the new challenges to peace and security, including international terrorism, can be fully addressed only through international partnerships. To that end, Malawi encourages the United Nations to address regional conflicts through its collaboration with the European Union, NATO, the Economic Community of West African States, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, the Southern African Development Community, the Association of South-East Asian Nations and the Organization of American States.

The United Nations today is the supreme custodian of the international peace agenda. The major task of the General Assembly, therefore, remains the identification of potent ways to strengthen, rather than weaken, it. The United Nations and its Security Council have recently suffered from a loss of credibility and effectiveness in the face of certain conflicts, including that in Iraq. However, it is gratifying to note that the lost credibility has returned to the United Nations and some faith in it has been restored.

No single nation today can claim to have the capacity to resolve, single-handedly, an armed conflict of the magnitude of that in the Middle East. The United Nations role with regard to the Palestinian problem, therefore, must continue to be visible, with international support being provided through the Quartet.

In the area of humanitarian commitment, the commendable performance of the United Nations, working through its agencies, has registered conspicuous successes with regard to situations of natural disaster, diseases such as HIV/AIDS, war and forced displacement. Sub-Saharan Africa is today home to 29.4 million people infected with HIV/AIDS. These problems together form a cycle of hopelessness made worse by poverty.

While acknowledging the invaluable and crucial role of the United Nations in the coordination of assistance and the protection of civilians in armed conflict, Malawi requests the timely delivery of such assistance.

Given the magnitude of the poverty suffered by most countries — exacerbated by the destabilizing effects of threats to peace and security — development in those countries could well remain an illusion. According to the Secretary-General's report, critical elements to promote development include enhanced and increased financing for development; private sector cooperation; the success of trade negotiations; the alleviation of urban and rural poverty; secure access to food, good health and education; improved governance; opportunities for impoverished women; and the acquisition of communication technologies. Malawi suffers from extreme poverty, which hampers the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. The United Nations must continue to work creatively to reduce, with international support, the gap between the rich and the poor.

In conclusion, Malawi commends the Secretary-General for his two comprehensive reports and for the strategies that he has outlined. Malawi reiterates that the United Nations is the supreme multilateral Organization competent to address global issues through collective approaches and shared responsibility.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): It is with great pleasure that the Icelandic delegation congratulates Mr. Hunte on his election as President of the General Assembly.

We thank the Secretary-General for his reports on implementation of the Millennium Declaration (A/58/323) and on the work of the Organization (A/58/1), which reflect the challenges that the United Nations faces in a turbulent and unpredictable world and which together cover the entire agenda of the Organization. In his introduction to his report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General correctly points out that the United Nations is not an end in itself but rather an instrument for achieving common ends.

In the general debate at the beginning of this fifty-eighth session, we heard a resounding message: now is the time to reform the United Nations system and to ensure that it will serve contemporary and future generations in an effective and relevant manner.

Iceland welcomes and supports the initiative of the Secretary-General to establish a high-level panel of eminent personalities to make the necessary recommendations for the future of our common Organization. Now we need men and women of wisdom and experience, of vision and courage to secure the future of the United Nations. They will need to address a number of issues, including, first, the role and status of the General Assembly as the chief policy-making body of the United Nations and, secondly, the need for a more open, more representative Security Council, reflecting the views of the States Members of the United Nations nearly 60 years after its foundation.

Thirdly, by adopting the best in information technology, the United Nations will not only be a more effective and open organization; it can also help in bridging the information divide in the world.

We may not realize in our daily work at the United Nations that this is an organization in constant flux. Some changes are minor adjustments; others, such as the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, are milestones. The United Nations must continue adjusting to an ever-changing world.

The objectives ahead are clear. What is now on the agenda is implementation. We align ourselves with the statement of the European Union on the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, in particular its statement that the values we seek are best guaranteed through effective multilateralism.

Let us not wait, but let us heed the Secretary-General's call for these urgent and timely changes and reforms. In that connection, I would like to refer to the words of Mr. Halldor Ásgrímsson, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland; in his recent address to the Assembly, he said that we must craft for ourselves a United Nations that is task-oriented, representative, focused and coordinated. Iceland believes that the opportunity is here, and that the moment is now.

Mr. Schori (Sweden): Let me begin by emphasizing that Sweden fully aligns itself with the statement made by Italy on behalf of the European Union. I can therefore be brief.

There is a window of opportunity for reform during this session of the General Assembly. The call for further reform of the United Nations was again brought to the Assembly by the Secretary-General through his report on implementation of the Millennium Declaration (A/58/323) and his statement at the opening of this session of the General Assembly. A vast majority of the speakers during the general debate also agreed on the necessity of making reform happen.

Sweden would like to underline its support for the Secretary-General's initiative to establish a panel of eminent personalities. Its establishment challenges us to work with even more determination to achieve tangible results in the areas that the Secretary-General has rightly pointed to as fundamental to the work of the Organization. We look forward to an active dialogue with the panel.

But we cannot just await the results of the panel's work. Reform must be brought forward now — indeed, during this session. The Assembly can be revitalized. It is a matter of political will. There is no lack of constructive ideas. Sweden encourages the President of the General Assembly to further this part of the reform agenda and to put concrete suggestions before the Assembly. He can count on our support in this.

If we wish the General Assembly to be a vigorous actor in the international political arena, we should take time to reflect on its modus operandi. We in the Assembly must ask ourselves whether the draft resolutions that we traditionally introduce — sometimes with very few changes from year to year — serve their intended purpose and reflect the current situation. Is the best way to influence the situation to routinely request another report from the Secretary-General? In some cases we could — and should — consider biennializing or triennializing resolutions, discontinuing some of our initiatives, or changing their focus. That way, we would also ease the burden of the Secretariat so that it could better focus on current and more urgent requests from the Assembly.

Reform of the Security Council — that is, its enlargement — is essential, even inevitable, if we want the Council to stay relevant. Rather than trying to find the optimal solution now for decades to come, we should accept that any reform may have to be re-thought, in five or 10 years' time. Such reform would clearly signal that the United Nations is prepared to adapt and adjust in order to safeguard its authority in world politics. We will return to this item in greater depth during next week's discussions in the Assembly.

The Millennium Development Goals represent a unique opportunity for the world's countries to work together for equitable and sustainable global and national development. The eighth Millennium Development Goal is unique, as it represents a true partnership between developing and developed countries. Indeed, together with the Monterrey Consensus, it implies a contract of mutual obligations. The policies and actions relating to the eighth Millennium Development Goal — and thus primarily to us in the developed countries — should be made more precise. We support the call of the Secretary-General for a firm timetable with built-in deadlines.

Rich countries such as Sweden should be obligated to report on their progress towards achieving

the Millennium Development Goals, especially concerning the agenda of the eighth Goal. It is a matter of responsibility, credibility and donor accountability. An international framework for reporting on the eighth Millennium Development Goal must be designed and implemented.

The Government of Sweden has presented to its Parliament a bill on a policy for global development; policy coherence and donor accountability are at its heart. What used to be primarily the task of development cooperation is now a task for the entire Government. This is a pioneering change. The bill will provide Sweden with a solid platform to take an even stronger and more active part in contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. We will not miss that opportunity.

Mr. Sagach (Ukraine): I have the honour to speak on behalf of GUUAM States: the Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

At the historic Millennium Summit and at the Security Council Summit the leaders of United Nations Member States adopted two milestone declarations, enriched by the half-century experience of an Organization that embodied our common hopes and expectations for living in the twenty-first century, in a more secure and just world.

However, subsequent developments in the world brought new and daunting challenges before the international community. Three years after the millennium events, we find ourselves at the point where the very credibility of the United Nations and its ability to deal with old and new challenges are questioned.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the preparation of his comprehensive and thought-provoking report on implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/58/323), in which he raises many issues of great importance for the future of both this Organization and the world as a whole. It is our common responsibility to find answers to those questions if we truly want to see the goals of the Millennium Declaration achieved.

Yet earlier this year, the United Nations was divided on the way to resolve the Iraqi crisis. We firmly believe that the instruments of the United Nations are very important for the normalization of the situation in that country. Whatever the arguments were, we must now come together for a common purpose: to restore sovereignty to the Iraqi people as quickly as practically possible, to restore the law and order and to conduct large-scale reconstruction of the country. We have a shared interest in helping Iraqi citizens embrace the freedoms that they have been denied for so long and for which the United Nations was founded. Guided by a sense of responsibility for the destiny of the Iraqi nation for peace and security in the region, the GUUAM Member States dispatched their military contingents to the Persian Gulf. We hope that the Security Council will agree soon on a new resolution to strengthen the United Nations role in Iraq, including by providing the necessary arrangements in the area of security.

GUUAM strongly supports the need to strengthen the United Nations, as the major forum for international cooperation and for achieving collective decisions on issues of common concern and on its ability to deal with them. GUUAM welcomes the intention of the Secretary-General to establish a high-level panel of eminent personalities to examine current challenges to peace and security and to provide, before the next session of the General Assembly, recommendations on ways to strengthen United Nations response to those challenges.

We have witnessed significant changes achieved in the implementation of the recommendations of a similar panel, chaired by Ambassador Brahimi, on peacekeeping reform. In this area, the United Nations has the capacity today to act, and it already acts more flexibly, rapidly and effectively. We hope that the recent discussions and actions in the area of conflict prevention will bring us closer to establishing an international system capable of the timely and efficient prevention of armed conflicts. This dimension should be pivotal in the philosophy of future United Nations activities.

GUUAM firmly condemns terrorism in all its manifestations. Our countries joined the anti-terrorist coalition from the very beginning and have made a significant contribution to its activities. As the threat of terrorism to international peace and security requires sustained, long-term and global action, this Organization continues to play the central role in facilitating intergovernmental cooperation in the fight against it, as well as in strengthening the capacity of each nation's legislation and executive machinery to combat terrorism.

Today we may say that the GUUAM States are taking part in the implementation of all 12 universal anti-terrorist conventions through, inter alia, appropriate bilateral and multilateral mechanisms. The summary report on GUUAM counter-terrorism activities was presented during the special meeting of the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee with international, regional and subregional organizations, held last March.

Another issue to which I would like to draw the attention of Members relates to the problem of so-called frozen conflicts, which were left as unhealed scars in the new independent States that emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The international community cannot turn a blind eye to the lack of progress in the settlement of conflicts in Abkhazia, Georgia; Nagorny-Karabakh, Republic of Azerbaijan; and Transdnistria, Republic of Moldova, which for a decade have been destabilizing the situation in our region. Postponing the final settlement of those crises might have irreversible consequences. We call on the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other international organizations involved to accelerate their respective efforts to resolve those conflicts.

Slight progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals has been made so far. More vigorous and coordinated efforts, both on the part of the donor community and the recipient countries, are needed. We believe that national ownership and leadership are critical for the successful implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

In the meantime, we need to strengthen our capacities to prepare the Millennium Development Goals reports, consolidate information for a poverty-related index and provide analysis for policy-makers. Therefore, the GUUAM States stress the need to operationalize the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) poverty reduction trust fund to this end.

As countries with economies in transition, the GUUAM States would greatly welcome the further strengthening of the capacity of the United Nations system, under the overall coordination of the Development Group, in the following areas: enhancing the role of United Nations Resident Coordinators and streamlining the UNDP-World Bank partnership formula at all levels; coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the decisions taken at the United Nations summits in Monterrey and Johannesburg; further promoting the Millennium Project, designed to draw intellectual power to bring new ideas on how to speed up attainment of the Millennium Development Goals; supplementing the efforts of national leadership through nurturing multistakeholder dialogue based on active participation of the private sector, civil society and non-governmental organizations; and further maintaining the Millennium campaign.

In a globalized world, a favourable external environment is no less important to sustainable development than is internal economic growth. Trade is crucial to fostering growth and reducing poverty. While two of the GUUAM States — Georgia and the Republic of Moldova — are members of the World Trade Organization (WTO), others — Ukraine, the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Uzbekistan — are still in the process of accession. We urge the international community to facilitate accession of those States to the WTO by providing special and differential treatment terms that will contribute to intraregional trade and will support national capacity-building. Taking into account the UNDP mandate in the field of trade, we emphasize the importance of its involvement in the process of strengthening trade negotiation capacities of acceding States.

The regional dimension cannot be overestimated in our development efforts. The Fifth Ministerial Conference of the Environment for Europe, held in Kiev this year, was a concrete follow-up to last year's World Summit on Sustainable Development. It proved successful in further consolidating the pan-European environmental process and in promoting the implementation of the outcome of the Johannesburg Summit in the region of Eastern and Central Europe.

The so-called soft security threats of HIV/AIDS and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), the illegal traffic in narcotic drugs, as well as other threats, demonstrate once again that, regardless of the differences countries may have, international cooperation is crucial to combating those challenges.

Everyone is aware of the devastating impact of diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis in a great number of countries, particularly in Africa. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which was set up on the initiative of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, has become an

effective tool for implementing the integrated action plan in this area. We commend the convening of the high-level meetings of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, on 22 September, and we hope that it will give further impetus to our joint efforts to overcome this scourge.

This year marks the fifty-fifth anniversary of the unique document in the area of the promotion and the protection of human rights — the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Only 15 years before its historic adoption by the General Assembly, Ukrainians became the victims of man-made famine, which was engineered as part of a totalitarian policy against the Ukrainian people and which resulted in the death of at least 7 million innocent men, women and children. We call upon all Members of the Assembly to support Ukraine's initiative for the United Nations to pay a tribute to the memory of those who perished. It is crucial that such chapters of world history be known and remembered. Knowledge gives us the power to foresee future tragedies and to prevent them before it is too late.

With its universal mandate and huge potential, the United Nations has a leading role in pursuing the Millennium Declaration Goals. GUUAM stands ready to cooperate in their implementation with other Member States and the United Nations. We therefore would greatly appreciate the support of all delegations to the request that GUUAM obtain observer status in the General Assembly.

Mr. Baduri (Eritrea): Allow me to seize this opportunity to express appreciation to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for the comprehensive reports on the work of the Organization (A/58/1) and on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Declaration (A/58/323). The reports are notable not only for their clarity, precision and objective assessment, but also for underscoring the myriad challenges that confront the international community and the opportunities that could have been exploited by it.

The two reports make it amply clear that there is a dialectical relationship between peace and development. Eritrea's bitter experience during the past four decades is only a tragic confirmation of this self-evident truth. Conflicts and war spawn instability. Instability causes socio-economic dislocation, stagnation and deterioration frustrates development efforts. Economic and social breakdown breeds extreme poverty that begets human insecurity. Lack of human security, broadly defined, is the primary root cause of conflict and war.

This has been the message that had informed the Millennium Declaration and subsequently the various summits during the past few years, including, in particular, the Monterrey, Doha and Johannesburg summits. It is also the reason that makes the achievement of the Development Goals of the Millennium Declaration central to any of our deliberations on either peace and security or development.

The achievement of these Goals demands collective action for mutual benefit. Humanity must therefore celebrate its unity by collectively confronting the problems and challenges of the new millennium that, it is now accepted, do not recognize international boundaries. It also acknowledges the imperative need for the United Nations, which has an indispensable role to play in the promotion of both peace and development, to be sufficiently empowered to ensure success. It is in this context that the Eritrean delegation shares the concern of the Secretary-General that, during the past two years, achievements have seriously lagged behind the timetable set by the Millennium Declaration to meet these Goals. It is also in this context that it wishes to address some of the issues raised in the two reports.

Recent events confirm that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continues to pose a grave threat to world peace and security. The destruction of these weapons and their delivery systems remains essential to the protection and the promotion of international peace and security. Yet, humanity is also suffering from the massive use of sophisticated conventional weapons, which have been used, even by the poorest of countries, in attempts to suppress a multiplicity of armed rebellions in their countries, as well as to equip groups to commit hegemonic aggression against their neighbours. Africa, and particularly the Horn of Africa, has been one such zone of instability. These States, which have abandoned their constitutional and international responsibilities to their peoples, region and the international community, continue to trigger ruinous arms races that wreak havoc on themselves and their neighbours.

Terrorism, transnational crime and drug trafficking have also contributed to the erosion of human security. Terrorism, in particular, is now a major

threat to peace and security and must be eradicated as soon as possible, with the active participation of all humanity. It is gratifying to note that the international community has shown solidarity and assumed collective responsibility in the fight against the scourge. Yet, it would be counter-productive and meaningless to fight terrorism without addressing the root causes of terrorism.

It is with satisfaction that the Eritrean delegation notes the Secretary-General's intent to shift focus from conflict response to conflict prevention. This will constitute a major step forward in the search for peace and development. Unfortunately, the proposal for the creation of a culture of conflict prevention does not, at present, seem to be attracting much support, although it is eminently clear that prevention is more effective and much less costly than peacekeeping or peace-building.

This, however, does not mean that peacekeeping should not be viewed as a major concern of our Organization. The Eritrean delegation considers peacekeeping operations as a critical component of the overall mission of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security. The Eritrean delegation has also taken note and, with a few exceptions, is supportive of the activities of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the areas of planning, management and support of peacekeeping operations.

The Secretary-General has repeatedly emphasized that any attempt to implement the Millennium Development Goals must, as a matter of priority, address the disparities between the various regions of the world. The Eritrean delegation notes with satisfaction that Africa is being given the attention it deserves. Of all the regions, Africa has been ravaged the most by poverty, conflict and pandemics. Unfortunately, it shares the concerns already expressed in this debate that there has hardly been any progress made in Africa to assure achievement of the Development Goals and that conditions in some countries have, in fact, deteriorated.

Nevertheless, it is our earnest hope that the decisions and resolutions of the various summits and other meetings on economic development and international cooperation will be effectively implemented to ensure the elimination of the obstacles that have hitherto hindered economic growth and sustainable development. The problem of poverty eradication, which has dominated the agenda of most of these meetings, must in particular be given urgent attention without minimizing the importance of foreign direct investment, sustainable financing of external debt, official development assistance and fair international trade.

The 2001 report of the World Health Organization clearly indicates that the current public health situation in third world countries is detrimental to their development. Consequently, investment in the health sector is critical, not only to improve health conditions, but also to ensure human security, as envisaged in the Millennium Development Goals. A coordinated and holistic approach and international assistance are needed to meaningfully tackle the most threatening infectious diseases, in particular HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS is a good example of the type of approach and cooperation needed in any such effort, although no major progress has been achieved since that meeting.

Eritrea recognizes — if only because we have been fighting for our human rights for 30 years — that respecting human rights is an expression of the noblest attributes of human nature. Human rights constitute the bedrock requirement for the realization of the Charter's vision. We acknowledge the success of the United Nations in bringing human rights to the forefront of its agenda and to prominence in international relations. However, the United Nations has ignored Eritreans' pleas for the respect of their basic human right — their right to self-determination — and ignored the trampling of their other human rights by successive colonial Ethiopian Governments. We are gratified that human rights have assumed a rightfully central function in international relations, even as it is obvious that this concept is abused and plagued by selective enforcement, double standards, politicization and holier-than-thou attitudes.

Many regions of the world are affected today by humanitarian crises caused by conflict and natural disasters. Most of the countries affected belong to the third world, in particular, Africa. While it is true that progress has been made in the delivery of humanitarian assistance to these countries, it is also true that much more needs to be done. It is therefore incumbent on the Members of the United Nations to empower the Organization and to actively cooperate with it, with a view to enabling it to act speedily and effectively in situations of emergency, whether due to conflict,

drought, famine, displacement, natural disasters or infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Also, it would be the height of moral and political insensitivity to deliberately ignore the fact that all victims are equal.

I wish to conclude by reiterating Eritrea's avid interest in the reform and strengthening of the United Nations. The Eritrean delegation therefore welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the matter and shall contribute its views during the debate of the appropriate agenda item.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation supports the statement made yesterday by the permanent representative of Peru, on behalf of the Rio Group, and therefore would simply like to add a few comments on this topic.

First, I would like to say that, as in the previous two years, my delegation shares the concerns of the Secretary-General regarding the uneven implementation of the Millennium Declaration. There still remain many disparities in this area, and results in achieving the Millennium Development Goals have been mixed. In his recent report, the Secretary-General indicated that, "In the area of peace and security, in particular, the consensus expressed or implied in the Declaration now looks less solid than it did three years ago" (*A/58/323, para. 3*). At the same time, he points out that, "In the area of development, by contrast, a stronger consensus has been forged, but grave doubts remain as to whether Member States are sufficiently determined to act on it" (*ibid.*).

As has also been said, there is a risk of stagnation or even reversal of progress in the areas of human rights and democracy. This picture has been further complicated by the events in recent months. Still, there are encouraging signs, such as the fact that, last year, progress was made towards universal ratification of the six main instruments governing human rights. As a promoter of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and their Families, Mexico welcomes the entry into force of this instrument and hopes that more countries will adhere to it. We also view with satisfaction the fact that the Assembly has unanimously adopted a resolution that reiterates the importance of the fact that, in the fight against terrorism, human rights must be fully respected.

Nationally, I am pleased to reiterate the fact that Mexico has made headway in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. As was indicated by the President of Mexico, Vicente Fox, from this rostrum, we have adopted these Goals as our own and have worked in all areas of development to achieve them, both within the proper timeframes and in the proper way. We particularly emphasize the important — though, as yet, insufficient — progress that has been made in poverty reduction.

At the same time, we have continued to be committed to promoting and respecting human rights, and are moving forward to consolidate our democracy and eradicate the plague of corruption.

Mexico welcomes the fact that this rostrum has been used by the delegations participating in this debate to reiterate their commitment to the reform of our Organization. We have listened here to many proposals, which deserve our consideration and on which we must come to decisions. We agree with the view of the Secretary-General when he says that the United Nations requires truly radical reform, with a view to responding to the many challenges and threats that face the international community. We also agree that the great strength of our Organization resides in its legitimacy, which is founded upon the principles enshrined in the San Francisco Charter. Therefore, reform must lead to a revitalization of Member States' commitment to our Organization, with a view to giv8ing its decisions more effectiveness and legitimacy and to ensuring that they are respected. There is no alternative to the United Nations and our commitment to its reform must therefore be unswerving, sustained and unambiguous.

The President took the Chair.

Mexico supports the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a panel of eminent personalities to study and make recommendations on the main organs of the United Nations, their performance and reform. We believe that it is essential at the same time to give the highest level of political support to such reform and actively to work in all areas, here and now in this General Assembly, using this session to make meaningful progress that will make our work more efficient and legitimate.

As regards revitalizing the General Assembly, we believe that, while one of our organ's great merits is its universal and broadly democratic nature, it is essential that it also acquire true executive capabilities. To that end, it is necessary to develop new machinery. The General Assembly should also update its working procedures. The Assembly cannot continue to consider

all of the items on its agenda at each session. It must be able to focus on a smaller number of items at each opportunity — items that reflect the main priorities and concerns of the international community — so as to delve deeper into its consideration of them and to establish guidelines to orient our work in the Organization as a whole.

With respect to the Economic and Social Council, while progress has been made in its restructuring, it is essential that we strengthen its role as coordinating organ of the activities of the specialized agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions — a function that has been allocated to it by the Charter. The influence of the United Nations in economic and financial issues will depend largely on an understanding of the role which the Economic and Social Council must play, actively and to the full.

As to the Secretariat, we believe that, while significant administrative reform has been made, it is necessary to eliminate inertia and improper practices that commonly identify posts with certain countries or permit excessively autonomous centres of power to flourish.

As the Secretary-General clearly says in his report, the decisions of the Security Council increasingly lack legitimacy in the eyes of the developing countries, which, I reiterate, represent the majority of Members of our Organization. We are therefore convinced that the way to ensure the greater legitimacy of and, accordingly, greater support for the Council's decisions and actions is through reform leading to greater transparency in its working methods, greater representativity and the increasingly limited resort to the veto. Like other delegations, we believe that the way to achieve this goal is not by expanding privileges within the Council, such as permanent membership, or by perpetuating the right of veto in its current form. Mexico considers such privileges to be out of date.

It has again become clear through our discussion that, while there is some agreement on the need to reform the United Nations, there is nonetheless evident reluctance to abandon traditional national positions. The current circumstances require all Member States to find common ground, forsake unrealistic claims and act together in the interest of the entire international community.

Mr. Zenna (Ethiopia): My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization and the follow-up to the United Nations Millennium Declaration. We commend his continuously innovative approach to reforming and strengthening our Organization.

Ethiopia welcomes the proposed establishment of a high-level panel of eminent personalities, as announced by the Secretary-General in his opening speech on 23 September 2003. We agree with him that change is needed in the United Nations to tackle the growing challenges that confront all humanity. Change is needed to enable the United Nations to play a still more central role in fighting poverty and enhancing the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. We need to strengthen the United Nations in order to make it a more potent force in fighting terrorism and maintaining world peace and stability. Ethiopia will work with other Member countries to make the United Nations more efficient and effective.

We note with grave concern the fact that much of the world is falling short in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Worse still, progress in the attainment of the Goals — such as halving global poverty, substantially reducing child mortality and the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS — have been uneven, with marked differences among and within regions.

The recent Human Development Report, under the theme "Millennium Development Goals", states that some 54 countries are poorer now than they were in 1990 and that in 21 countries a larger proportion of people are suffering from hunger. In 14 countries, more children are dying before the age of five and in 12 countries primary school enrolment is shrinking. Furthermore, human development indices declined in 21 countries. All the aforementioned figures indicate that we are not on the right track towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Since the Millennium Summit, we have undertaken a number of new commitments. The world has never been short of commitments and pledges. However, the fundamental challenge involves translating words into deeds and keeping the commitments already made. Estimates indicate that at least a doubling of official development assistance from its current level of $50 billion is needed to fulfil

the Millennium Development Goals, which were globally pledged.

Similarly, while encouraging achievements have resulted from addressing the debt crisis of some poor countries through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative and other mechanisms, the call for a swifter and deeper debt-relief mechanism remains unheeded. Consequently, many African countries continue to suffer as a result of a debilitating debt burden.

The objective of meeting the special needs of Africa must remain at the top of the agenda in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Estimates indicate that, in order to achieve the goal of halving the number of people living in absolute poverty in Africa, the economies of that country must grow by at least 7 per cent annually. But statistics tell us that many countries in Africa are well below that target.

The 2003 *Economic Report on Africa*, issued by the Economic Commission for Africa, indicates that Africa's growth in gross domestic product declined from an average of 4.3 per cent in 2001 to 3.2 per cent in 2002. According to the report, in 2002, of the 53 African countries, only five achieved the 7 per cent growth rate required to meet the Millennium Development Goals. Hence, if the Goals are to be met, it is essential that the commitments made should be carried out — and carried out immediately.

We in Ethiopia believe that the achievement of the Millennium Development goals relating to poverty eradication will depend to a great extent on progress in rural and agricultural development. This is mainly because about 85 per cent of our population, and an even larger percentage of the poor, live in rural areas. The other reason is that efforts to reduce the deepening urban poverty can hardly bear fruit in the absence of rapid progress in agricultural and rural development activities.

It is with this in mind that the Government has decided to embark on a substantial and sustained investment in research and extension, in farmer education and training, in water harvesting and in building the physical and institutional infrastructures of rural markets.

We have also begun to focus more on strengthening the governance system with a view to ensuring peace and stability, enhancing the participation of the rural people in the design and implementation of rural development programmes, and actively engaging the State in the rural areas.

Mr. Swe (Myanmar): At the outset, allow me to thank the Secretary-General for his two reports — the report on the work of the Organization and the report on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Taken together with his statement to the General Assembly on 23 September, they cover a wide spectrum of the Organization's activities and events over the preceding 12 months, including peace and security issues, terrorism, human rights, democracy, HIV/AIDS, narcotic drugs and sustainable development.

In the area of peace and security, we share the Secretary-General's assessment that the year under review was indeed a challenging time for our Organization and that the war in Iraq greatly tested the principle of collective security and the resilience of the Organization. We fully agree with the view expressed by the Secretary-General and share his concern that the use of force pre-emptively could set precedents that result in proliferation of the unilateral and lawless use of force, with or without justification.

We cannot aspire to overcome the complex problems that beset our world without a reaffirmation of the universal commitment to the principles of multilateralism and international law. Indeed, Myanmar is steadfast in its belief that the United Nations has an indispensable role to play in ensuring international peace and security.

Terrorism poses a grave threat to the international community. A little over a month ago, terrorists brought destruction to the very doorstep of our Organization when they took the lives of 22 United Nations personnel in a bomb attack on United Nations headquarters in Iraq. The international community must meet the challenge without giving any quarter to terrorists, anywhere. At the same time, we must address the political, social and economic inequalities that cause alienation and despair in order adequately to address this challenge.

The Secretary-General has stressed the necessity of strengthening the weapons of mass destruction regime. The continued proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a threat to international peace and security. In our view, the issue can be resolved only through multilateral disarmament measures. Bypassing the will of the majority of the international community

under the pretext of combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction cannot in any way contribute to international peace and security, as recent events have clearly shown.

The menace of narcotic drugs is adequately reflected in the Secretary-General's report and deserves our undivided attention. The drug menace is closely linked to crime and terrorism. Success in the war against drugs will contribute to a successful outcome in the fight against terror and crime. In Myanmar, the suppression of narcotic drugs is accorded the highest priority. We have initiated a 15-year plan that would totally eradicate narcotic drugs from the country by 2014. The plan is formulated based on the balanced approach of the United Nations, which aims to reduce supply, demand and abuse, with the active participation of the local community.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has recognized Myanmar's commitment to the anti-drug campaign. Commencing in January 2004, Myanmar will serve on the United Nations Commission on Narcotics Drugs and hopes to work with other members in combating this scourge to humankind.

Today the world is faced with another challenge which poses no less a threat than terrorism or drugs. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has brought misery and suffering to countless numbers of people. The special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS brought together Governments, civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in the quest to find an effective and timely response to the challenges posed by the pandemic. The new level of commitment by the international community encourages us and must be translated into action.

Speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco pointed out, among other things, that

> "Sustainable development also requires that food security be guaranteed [in addition to a good economic situation], as well as adequate health and education services." *(see A/58/PV.23)*

We wholeheartedly support the statement by the Chairman of the Group of 77.

In Myanmar, we have given special priority to the development of the border areas where the national peoples reside. The programme now encompasses all parts of the country and seeks to narrow the gap between urban and rural areas. Development activities that have a direct impact on improving living standards of the populace have been activated. These include construction of roads, bridges, schools and hospitals. Modern agricultural methods have been introduced by means of a programme that now covers 83,000 square miles, where 5.3 million of our citizens live. The Government has spent nearly 46 billion kyats — more than $500 million — to create an enabling environment for sustainable development.

Together with Member States, Myanmar pledges to promote and observe human rights, democracy and good governance, as enunciated in the Millennium Declaration. Myanmar is among the first countries to embrace the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We acknowledge the universality and indivisibility of human rights. At the same time, Myanmar also gives priority to the right to development.

My country is making every effort to fulfil the fundamental rights of its citizens. The rights of women, children, the sick, the aged and other disadvantaged members of society are closely protected. The Myanmar Human Rights Committee was established to ensure the inalienable rights of our citizens. My Government is cooperating with the United Nations human rights bodies, the Special Rapporteur and other experts in the field. The International Committee of the Red Cross has free and unfettered access to prisons nationwide.

The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration inaccurately cites Myanmar as one of the countries "where resistance to democracy is strong, even though the majority of the people clearly desire change" (*A/58/323, para. 85*). We are greatly perplexed by this. Insofar as Myanmar is concerned, nothing is further from the truth. My Government is firmly committed to the attainment of democracy in Myanmar. We have the political will for a systematic transformation into a democracy.

On 30 August 2003, the new Prime Minister of my country, in his first official address to the nation, outlined a road map that would firmly guide Myanmar to democracy. If the promotion of democracy is truly the desire of the international community, the Myanmar road map ought to be welcomed and encouraged. For

our part, we are firm in our resolve to implement the road map to democracy to its successful conclusion.

Mr. Gallegos (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the way in which you are guiding the debates of the General Assembly and to reiterate that we stand ready to cooperate with you.

At the outset, I would like to support the statements made by the permanent representative of Peru, on behalf of the Rio Group and by the permanent representative of Morocco, on behalf of Group of 77.

I believe that the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization and on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit will enable us to give further thought to the Organization's objectives at a time when the Member States that created the United Nations should be examining themselves and adopting the necessary political decisions to reform the architecture of the international institutions so that they may meet the challenges of the world in which we live.

I would like to congratulate the Secretary-General for his reports and commend the fact that they contain recommendations for dealing with the historic events that humanity is experiencing today. My delegation agrees with the Secretary-General that radical reform of the multilateral institutions is necessary.

Ecuador believes that it is necessary to reform the United Nations and has done its utmost to reach consensus to make headway on the path to structural and substantive reform. This is not an easy endeavour. There are differences among Member States over the reform of the United Nations, as well as on the need to revitalize the General Assembly. There can be no doubt that any reform requires the political will of the Member States, and we should make every effort to ensure that world leaders understand the need for a substantial change in multilateral institutions.

If the Organization is to remain relevant, we must accept that not only procedural but also substantive change is needed. The people of the world look to the United Nations with hope. That hope has been shaken many times, because utopias and idealism clash with reality. International politics is based on interests rather than principle or law. Accordingly, it is crucial to harmonize the interests of all Member States with of a vision of a world that is more equitable, just and humane.

As we ascend the stairs to this Hall, we can admire two impressive murals depicting war and peace, well-being and poverty. During the 50-year history of the Organization, we have not been able to resolve the violent conflicts that affect innocent human beings every day. It is not enough to make rhetorical statements to stop the terrible atrocities, in which knives and machetes become weapons of mass destruction. Thousands of victims of mutilation, rape, torture and assassination attest to the ineffectiveness of the system. This cannot continue. This is not ethical.

The revitalization of the General Assembly should not be limited to simplifying mechanisms and reducing the number of items that are discussed. We should return to the origins of the United Nations and make the general debate the gathering place for the political will of the heads of State or Government to come together to reach solutions to the complex problems of humanity. This is the forum in which debate and the quest for universal consensus should occur. I believe that it would be desirable to make decisions agreed upon by the General Assembly binding on the State Members and other international actors.

The reform of the Security Council should go beyond increasing the number of its members. There should be fundamental change that, as the Secretary-General has said, responds to the political realities of the twenty-first century. The present dangers in the world stem not only from States, but also from transnational terrorist organizations, organized crime and institutionalized violence. The Security Council must change because the world has changed.

The Economic and Social Council should be able to respond to a vision of a world that is integrated and globalized in its international relations. Today, all of us are citizens of the world. We are 6 billion people, and half go to bed hungry, which is also unethical. The developing countries would be less poor if the developed countries stopped subsidizing their agricultural products by $1.2 billion a day. The dignity of a human being is found in his work, and we cannot reach this goal if artificial barriers are created that doom us to poverty. Here lies the central role of the United Nations: achieving justice and equality.

Reform can be postponed no longer; we have discussed it for many years. I belong to the school of thought of Arnold Toynbee, who maintains in his monumental *Study of History* that in the annals of

history, the civilizations that disappeared did so because they were unable to adapt to change. Change, as Heraclitus maintained, is constant. If we do not change the multilateral structure of the United Nations and its specialized agencies so that they respond to the needs of our peoples, we will have condemned to failure the greatest consultative effort in the history of humanity.

From this rostrum, I appeal to the representatives of Member States that all of us respond to the cries of our peoples and find the political will to adopt reforms of the international system that will enable us to provide a better tomorrow for our children.

Mr. Taha (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for having submitted the two important reports now before the Assembly. In addition, we subscribe to the statement made earlier by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Millennium Declaration set forth ways and means of tackling the new millennium's challenges: economic and social underdevelopment, worsening poverty and rampant epidemics such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, in addition to issues of international peace and security, terrorism, organized crime and armed conflict.

Among needed reforms on which not much progress has been made, we should like to emphasize the need to reform the Security Council. Its permanent and non-permanent membership must be expanded so that it becomes more representative of the United Nations membership as a whole, and its working methods must be improved so that its decision-making process is more democratic and transparent. I believe that the Council's importance underscores the need to reflect on how to elaborate new ways to reform it. In that connection, I should like to draw attention to the bold proposal by the Prime Minister of Malaysia to improve the veto by stipulating that it be used only in conjunction with the efforts of more than one State, thereby reducing the degree of domination by permanent members.

Despite the holding of international conferences in an attempt to bring people's views closer together, there is an ever-widening gap between the rich countries of the North and the poor countries of the South. Therefore, it is imperative that we create a fair and democratic international economic order that will enable us to create better conditions for international trade between rich and poor countries, transcending the failure of Cancún by improving the amount of official assistance provided to poor countries and eliminating their external debts. We welcome the New Partnership for Africa's Development as a purely African initiative providing a framework that will enable the international community to help the continent to develop. We look forward to practical outcomes that should reflect the international will of the General Assembly to support the continent.

As a result of the economic and social conditions in the least developed countries, the international community must attach particular importance to seriously helping that group of countries to emerge from the poverty, hunger and disease that afflict them. In that connection, we should like to commend the General Assembly's decision in December 2001 to create the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to coordinate, monitor and follow up implementation of programmes of action for those countries.

We welcome the Secretary-General's statement concerning human rights and fundamental freedoms and their intertwined relationship with economic, social, political and cultural problems. In this regard, we renounce the use of selectivity, double standards and politicization of those noble principles.

The international community has responded to the appeals to fight terrorism. We agree with the States that have requested the convening of an international conference to define terrorism so that it can be distinguished from the right of peoples to struggle against aggression. In addition, we should study the root causes of that phenomenon and its hasty and unjustified linkage to a particular religion or ideology, because its victims include those of all religions, nationalities and races.

In his report, the Secretary-General indicated that Sudan has made some progress towards a timely comprehensive conclusion of an agreement. We should also like to point out that we concluded an agreement on security arrangements last September and that we hope to announce shortly the conclusion of a comprehensive settlement on an end to the civil war in Sudan.

Mr. Schurti (Liechtenstein): Liechtenstein welcomes the Secretary-General's reports on the work of the Organization and on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. In particular, we appreciate his keen eye for those areas in which we — the Member States that make up the Organization — are faltering in our commitments and political will.

To be sure, the past year was a uniquely challenging one for the Organization, but we must recognize that it was not outside circumstances or disasters that caused what has come to be perceived as a crisis. In fact, the toughest challenge for the Organization came from within the membership. If the crisis originated within the membership, the solution will also, of course, be found among and by the Member States.

We remain firmly convinced that an Organization that is strong and is perceived as such by everyone is in the best interests of all Member States. It would indeed be tragic if the international community lost its capacity for multilateral cooperation, while its enemies have understood the strength of cooperation and organized themselves in destructive ways such as terrorist groups.

Last year we pointed out that it might be surprising for the Secretary-General to make strong calls for multilateralism before an audience that should epitomize multilateralism to the peoples of the world. However, the events of past months have made it abundantly clear that the crisis the Organization experienced in connection with the disagreement on the proper course of action against Iraq is no less than a crisis of multilateralism. Member States seem to have fallen out of step with world public opinion, which clearly favours joint multilateral efforts under the rule of law.

It is one of this Organization's great success stories — as the world's premier standard-setting body — that the rule of law could be promoted to the extent that today, nearly everywhere in the world, there is a strong sense of human rights and the rule of law. It is a sad irony that the observance of international law suffered setbacks because this Organization — and the Security Council in particular — finds it difficult to live up to its role as the guardian of the rule of law.

Legitimacy, in accordance with international law, is the outstanding quality of this Organization, guaranteeing credibility and acceptance. We must not gamble away this unique feature; rather, we are called upon to protect it. The crisis the United Nations has been going through in connection with the action taken against Iraq will not be ended by pragmatically returning to business as usual. Indeed, the Organization could be further harmed if it continues to operate in Iraq without a stronger and more comprehensive part to play. The perceived legitimacy and impartiality of the United Nations must not further be compromised. The Organization, in particular its employees on the ground, must not be put in a position where those on whose behalf it is acting perceive it to be serving interests other than those provided for in the United Nations Charter. We are convinced, however, that, when entrusted with a clear and strong mandate in Iraq, the United Nations will be able to live up to the supreme role afforded it by international law.

Liechtenstein applauds the Secretary-General for his ongoing reform work within the Secretariat, United Nations agencies and the operational activities of the system. Secretariat reform has been largely successful thus far, and we fully support his continuing work in this regard. As a Member State, we recognize that we can and should contribute more to making the United Nations system, and in particular intergovernmental bodies, more effective. A group of eminent personalities, as proposed by the Secretary-General, will be able to provide us with a fresh view on necessary steps to improve the functioning of this Organization.

Having said that, it is clear that no group of personalities, or other group, can make the necessary decisions on our behalf. In some areas, we have long recognized and come to an agreement on the fact that changes need to be made. We must now muster the political will to actually take the first step. As for the Security Council, after 10 years of debate, the time has come to move beyond improving its working methods and to make the structural changes needed. The Security Council must be made more representative to reflect demographic and geopolitical realities and to make it more credible. The privileges and responsibilities in the context of the decision-making process among the membership of the Security Council need to be adjusted.

Of course, only the General Assembly can undertake such work at the foundations. To start out, the General Assembly should assume its rightful role vis-à-vis the Security Council, in accordance with the

Charter, and deal more vigorously with pressing issues at hand. We will therefore support you, Mr. President, in your initiative to revitalize the General Assembly.

There seems to be a common perception that the main purpose of the United Nations is to maintain peace and security in the world. Historically, this is certainly understandable. Yet, even in the Charter of the United Nations, it was clearly recognized that peace and security are not, indeed cannot be, stand-alone areas of work. Working towards peace and human security must go in tandem with promoting human rights and advancing social and economic development. Consistently, the Charter provided that the work of the United Nations would have to encompass the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for the obligations arising from international law, the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, as well as the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples. Peace and security remain hardly imaginable without continuous work in all these areas.

Over the years, the General Assembly, particularly through conferences and summits, has forged an impressive set of legal instruments and adopted declarations and programmes of action that can serve us well in tackling the world's problems. Most recently, the standard-setting culminated in the Millennium Declaration, including the Millennium Development Goals, in which States reaffirmed the vision outlined in the Charter, spelling it out in concrete and specific terms relevant to our times. The Millennium Development Goals reflect the recognition that poverty remains a serious threat to peace and security.

That is to say that the Organization has been quite effective in defining problems and outlining the required responses. However, it does not reach the same level of effectiveness when it comes to the implementation of its own programmes of actions towards clearly defined goals. In following through, our performance is uneven. Thus, when talking about working to make the Organization more efficient, Member States must bear in mind that, in the end, their performance determines the success of the Organization. The success and, as a consequence, the credibility and legitimacy of the United Nations depends on the willingness of its Members to live up to the consensus declarations and commitments.

Mr. Savua (Fiji): The Millennium Declaration remains a milestone road map to help us focus more sharply on the development agenda for the twenty-first century. The lessons learned in the United Nations system since its inception have shaped a common vision of humankind, with the aim of bringing about a more peaceful, prosperous and just world, as detailed in the Declaration.

The Secretary-General's observations, in the two reports he submitted under items 10 and 60, on the constrained movement of the global community and by Member States in moving towards the set targets are very welcome, timely and constructive. The reports are helpful also in identifying obstacles and challenges. We agree with the need for radical institutional reforms. We heard many creative and practical suggestions during the general debate in this connection and consider it incumbent upon the presidency, in collaboration with the Secretary-General, to take on board those suggestions for institutional reforms and reforms in the working methods and in the substance of its various organs and bodies, for a total reinvigoration.

On its own, the world leaders' Millennium Declaration cannot stop or counter the threats to international peace and security that are being unleashed. Such threats are no longer confined to areas of conflict or crisis, as the events of 11 September and subsequent attacks exemplify. Even the United Nations is now a direct target for terrorist attacks, as evidenced by the Baghdad tragedy.

This week, the United Nations continues its deliberations in the Sixth Committee on how best to combat international terrorism through diplomatic channels, which continue to be obstructed by political differences. The Security Council's path, through its Counter-Terrorism Committee, has earned the respect of and rapport with Member States in implementing resolution 1373 (2001). While that route is cementing the anti-terrorism groundwork at the national and regional levels, clearly a political solution is now imperative to boost the fight against international terrorism.

Without excusing wanton and cowardly acts of terrorism against the lives of innocent people, meeting the Millennium Development Goals is a significant start to fighting terrorism. Meeting the Goals would uplift the quality of lives and thereby serve to uproot

the adverse social, economic and human rights conditions in which terrorist tendencies flourish.

Displacing those adverse conditions and tendencies and substituting them with a more enabling and empowering socio-economic environment will more than satisfy global collective commitments to the conferences and summits of the past decade, dating back to Rio and reaffirmed in Johannesburg. Meeting the Goals would help us, led by the United Nations, to realign the shifting planes which have been thrown into discord by globalization, as a result of which not only has trade balance been skewered, but many other global imbalances have become rapidly entrenched.

The tragedy is that not only are these global imbalances being felt at the global level and not only are the forces of globalization making the rich richer and the poor poorer on the global scene, but that the divide is even more pronounced and accentuated at the national level and across borders. This is a sure recipe for internal conflict, destabilization and terrorism and a distraction to the national Governments of developing countries — especially the least developed countries and small island developing States like my own country, Fiji — from our commitments to improving the quality of lives of our citizens.

While all the success stories of the United Nations peacekeeping role in Bougainville, East Timor, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Kosovo and other peace-building efforts are causes for celebration and reflection, they cannot give us the holistic global solution or the overall change in paradigm that the international community needs to implement collectively in order to find lasting solutions.

Some fatigue or lethargy may have crept into the Organization over decades of peace operations. The reforms in the peacekeeping sector alone that were recommended by the Brahimi report, although they may build on aspects of human rights and gender components, cannot bring lasting solutions without the radical reforms that the Secretary-General speaks of in order to keep alive hopes for multilateralism in this century. While Fiji looks forward to the Secretary-General's high-level panel on institutional reforms, we also trust that the panel will be convened following full consultations with regional groups and partners.

We need to see the United Nations taking a balanced approach to peace and security that can enhance Member States' commitment to the World Summit on Sustainable Development outcomes, in particular through the commitments of the developed partners to assisting home-grown development initiatives of developing partners. We also advocate global responses for global programmes, as with HIV/AIDS, multilateral trade or sustainable development.

In an ideal world, peace and security can be realized only by building trust among nations and States. States large and small must be enabled to participate meaningfully in the United Nations. We cannot do so by expanding the agenda of the United Nations in an exponential manner, leaving small and resource-poor States extremely limited in the issues and areas in which they can participate, while the basics remain to be satisfactorily addressed by this Organization. This trend in the United Nations grossly disadvantages us developing countries in numerous ways, leaving us engaged in a catch-up mode.

Developing countries hold some 80 per cent share of the global population and a still higher rate of the world's poverty statistics. Bearing this picture in mind, there are two options for this Organization. We can keep going as we have these past 50-odd years and maintain the status quo, or we can leave lasting footprints for the holistic changes we intend to make in this Organization or for reaping some value from the annual assessed contributions that we can ill afford to pay, both to the United Nations and to its related bodies and agencies, and which we need to see making a difference.

Fiji therefore embraces fully the opening statement with which you, Sir, inspired our leaders in opening the general debate and the many practical and forward-looking suggestions proffered by your delegation and by the many delegations that followed suit during that debate. In the same vein, we want to congratulate the Secretary-General on his astute assessment of shortcomings in the Organization and his perceptive recommendations for reform. We stand ready to support these efforts.

Mr. Moleko (Lesotho): Let me pay a well-deserved tribute to you, Sir, for your election to preside over this body during the fifty-eighth session. My delegation will cooperate with you to make this session a successful and memorable one for the future of our generation.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for a very thoughtful and comprehensive report on the work

of the United Nations and the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit. The challenges faced by our Organization have been very clearly set out by the Secretary-General. The Millennium Development Goals set three years ago show that the international community is indeed focused on the right and achievable objectives. The attainment of these objectives is, however, proving to be elusive because of the lack of political will and because of protectionism. The most intractable of these Goals is that of combating HIV and AIDS, malaria and other infectious diseases. This Goal is proving to be a challenge because of extreme poverty. We are also failing on the Goal of halving the proportion of people whose income is less than $1 per day. Poverty is still the biggest problem that we need to address. Any positive gain over it will necessarily translate into achievement on the other Goals, because there is an isomorphic mapping between poverty and the escalating HIV/AIDS infection rate.

We are failing to meet the targets that we set for ourselves and, in the process, have relegated some regions of the world to doom and possible disappearance. Sub-Saharan Africa is facing the greatest threat humankind has ever had to face. The Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria does, however, represent a real hope for those nations to address this problem. Governments have developed strategies to slow down the spread of the disease and, as Prime Minister Mosisili of Lesotho, has said:

> "The political will is very strong. What we need are resources and capacity-building. But the fact that we have no capacity — as we have been told ad nauseam — cannot and must not be used as an excuse for denying us resources." (*A/58/PV.3, p. 8*)

Our house is on fire and the neighbours who have water must come and help extinguish the fire to save our homes. We need the resources to help build the very capacity that we have been told we do not have.

The relevance of the United Nations in the wake of the escalating wars and internecine conflicts is a lemma requiring no mathematical proof. The startling terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 on the United States, the ensuing war on terrorism, the Iraq war and the recent attack against Syria in the name of the war on terrorism, show how much we in this Organization need each other. The founding fathers of our Organization learned from the two world wars that peace and international security could not be achieved through unilateralism. The lessons they learned then are as relevant today as they will be in the future.

The Middle East situation continues to show that unilateral actions by some States lead only to further insecurity in all the countries of the region. We recognize that, under Article 51 of the Charter, any country when attacked has an inherent right to self-defence. But unprovoked attacks on weaker nations are unacceptable. If States need to resort to force to resolve threats to international peace and security, they need the sanction of this Organization to legitimize their actions.

The general debate, which concluded recently, strongly endorsed multilateralism and reaffirmed that the United Nations remains the only Organization available to all nations, big and small, to address global issues, including terrorism, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, poverty and, of course, the challenges of globalization. My delegation would like to express its unwavering support for the General Assembly as the central body best able to address these world problems. It is thus necessary to direct our collective efforts at strengthening it, while maintaining its character as a body in which all States continue to have equal powers. We support the Secretary-General's call for the reform of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. We support his idea of appointing a panel of eminent persons to study this important issue and report at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly. We are confident that the persons he appoints will not only be eminent and knowledgeable, but will also reflect the face of the international community.

The reform of the Security Council — a body whose decisions bind all Member States, yet one in which only five out of 191 States have real power — is an issue that needs immediate attention. Mathematically, that figure represents just 2.6 per cent of the total membership of the United Nations. If the 10 elected members are factored in, that figure rises to 7.9 per cent. We all know that one Member State with the power of veto can thwart the will of the entire international community. Yet one Member State represents 0.5 per cent of the membership of the United Nations.

The Security Council is unrepresentative, and it needs to be reformed. In addressing this issue in his

statement to the General Assembly on 24 September, the Prime Minister of Lesotho, said:

> "It has been almost 10 years since the establishment of an open-ended working group to study all questions relating to equitable representation in the Security Council, including increasing the membership of the Council. My Delegation is of the view that there is an urgent need to accelerate the pace and to redouble our efforts to bring this matter to a conclusion. Let us face it: the very concept and practice of a veto in the Security Council is simply untenable and is totally at variance with the democratic principles of our modern times. For one member with a veto to overrule 14 others is simply undemocratic. It is patently unjust and contrary to every principle underpinning fair play and world order." (*A/58/PV.10, p. 20*)

I would like to echo those words of wisdom by my Prime Minister, and call for urgent action to bring the 10-year-long discussions of the open-ended working group to a close. We need to take action now on the many recommendations and ideas thus brought to the table.

Ms. Peksa-Krawiec (Poland): During the general debate, as well as in the current debate under agenda items 10 and 60, all speakers have underlined the need for bold, far-reaching and courageous steps if we want to preserve the United Nations as a relevant and vital Organization — an Organization that serves all of its Members, one that is able to respond to current threats and is ready to tackle all the new challenges of the twenty-first century.

We share the belief expressed by many delegations here that it is the strong commitment of all Member States to effective multilateralism which is needed if the United Nations system is to retain its unique and important role as the central forum for international cooperation.

Poland fully aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Italy, speaking on behalf of the presidency of the European Union, on the first day of our discussion on the reports on the outcome of the Millennium Summit and on the work of the Organization. As he said, we attach great importance to the principles and objectives set out in the Millennium Declaration and to all the issues addressed in it — questions relating to peace and security, development, human rights, democracy and good governance.

We hope that Member States will share the observations and conclusions contained in the reports of the Secretary-General and not only support the ongoing process of reform but also search for new ideas and concepts which will help to move forward the implementation of the Goals set out in the Declaration, strengthen multilateral mechanisms and confirm the position of the Organization as the most important institution of international security and cooperation.

A new vision of a more effective international order and collective security requires a new political consensus, especially in the light of recent events. This very conviction was the foundation of the proposal put forward during the fifty-seventh session by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, Mr. Wladzimierz Cimoszewicz, to launch a New Political Act relating to the United Nations at the dawn of the twenty-first century — a document which would provide fresh impetus for strengthening the principles and reinforcing the mechanisms of the United Nations system. Let me express our satisfaction with the fact that the Polish initiative corresponds with the position outlined by the Secretary-General at the outset of the general debate of the current Assembly session.

My country fully supports the proposal to establish a high-level panel of eminent personalities that would examine the role of collective action against current security challenges and review the operation of major United Nations organs. We are ready to give our full support to this body, as well as to help out in its endeavours.

Earlier this year, while consulting on our initiative, we collected a substantive body of thought, which was then reflected in the memorandum of the Government of the Republic of Poland. We are ready to share this and other documents with the panel, in the hope that it could make a substantial contribution and act as a good starting point for its deliberations and work.

We certainly expect the final document — the report of the high-level panel — to focus in a conceptual and holistic way on the nature of changes in the international system and provide a vision of a more effective international order. The report should in our opinion contain answers to questions posed by present challenges, including security risks related to

globalization and non-State actors, development gaps, international solidarity and good governance.

The high-level panel might at the same time formulate the reflection on the values and principles that bind the international community together and define the behaviour of States towards one another, towards other actors on the international scene and towards citizens. At the same time, we hope that the recommendations of the panel will reflect the need to further strengthen United Nations capacities in the fields of the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and that the United Nations mechanisms and instruments for providing peace, security and stability throughout the world will also be reviewed and enhanced.

We look forward to the Secretary-General's recommendations based on the work of the panel. We hope that they will give a fresh impetus to further conceptual thinking and reform of the United Nations system. We cannot, however, just sit and wait for the outcome of the deliberations of the eminent persons. While supporting their work, we must continue to strive for the smooth and timely implementation of the reforms already agreed upon. We have to intensify our efforts to make the daily work of the Organization more effective and fruitful. United Nations reform is not only the domain of high-level political initiatives; it is also a part of the everyday work of all of us in all forums.

We would like to urge the functional committees of the General Assembly to continue consideration of the reform package on a priority basis. From that perspective, the adoption of a new programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 which supports the full implementation of the Miliennium Declaration and the reform process will be of crucial importance. In our opinion, the Secretariat and other United Nations bodies should also continue and further strengthen the reform processes.

Poland strongly believes that, at the same time, we should search for ways to improve the work and the outcomes of the Security Council. Similarly, the role and working methods of the Economic and Social Council should be, in our opinion, reviewed and strengthened.

Finally, it is our conviction that, especially this year, Member States should engage more strongly in a process of revitalizing the General Assembly. We all agree that the Assembly should be given the most important political role in a global debate, but to achieve that we must make this body more effective, capable and strong. There are many proposals put forward in this context; we already have a basis to build upon. We therefore hope that, during this year's debate, under your leadership, Mr. President, we will be able to take bold decisions in this regard.

Echoing the appeal of the Secretary-General that we seek agreement on how to make the United Nations an Organization for our times, I should like to assure the Assembly that, in the course of this session, our delegation will do its best to contribute to the achievement of that goal.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these items for this meeting.

Several representatives have requested to exercise the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Kim Chang Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I am going to make a statement in exercise of the right of reply to the statement made yesterday by the representative of Japan on the nuclear issue.

The nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula is the outcome of the United States hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Japan does not contribute at all to its settlement by running amok to bring international pressure to bear on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United States is threatening a pre-emptive nuclear attack on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Japan is actively taking sides with the United States, laying bare its ambition of re-invading Korea and pronouncing its right to strike pre-emptively at military bases in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Before all these threats, how can the Democratic People's Republic of Korea lay down its war-deterrent force? The Iraq war taught the world the grave lesson that nobody on Earth — not even the United Nations — can protect weak and small nations from armed aggression by a super-Power.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea sternly warns Japan to discard its delusion of catching fish in the troubled waters of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States nuclear confrontation. Japan's anti-Democratic People's Republic of Korea frenzy will serve only to severely damage its own interests.

As for Democratic People's Republic of Korea-Japan relations, these will be possible only when Japan compensates for its past crimes on the Korean people. It is really foolish for Japan to think that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is so impatient to improve relations with Japan that it would compromise its principles and national interests. This is the core of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-Japan Pyongyang Declaration. The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is disappointed that Japan is incapable of understanding this simple logic.

My next point is that it is despicable for Japan to talk of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-Japan Pyongyang Declaration. Japan should, if nothing else, break itself of the bad habit of betraying its dialogue partner. Japan should try to earn its credibility in the eyes of the international community.

Mr. Mekel (Israel): I regret to take the floor in exercising this right of reply to comments by certain delegations that have abused the debate in the Assembly to further their narrow political agenda. Representatives who express such concern when Israel exercises counter-terrorism measures in an act of self-defence, but fail to express even the faintest whisper of concern when dozens of innocent lives are lost at the hands of terrorists groups and the States that sponsor them, had best take a good look in the mirror.

Such failure to expressly condemn the deliberate murder of innocent civilians speaks to a double standard that for too long has plagued the agenda of the Assembly. The fact that it is not the loss of 19 innocent lives in a Haifa restaurant, not to mention the hundreds of other victims of Palestinian terrorism, that moves certain representatives to speak or act, but rather Israel's defensive response to such aggression against a terrorist training facility speaks volumes about the values and intentions of such speakers.

Syria, a dictatorship which occupies a neighbouring State and which is known for sponsoring, financing and harbouring terrorism in violation of the most basic norms of international law, should be the last to speak of justice and law. The Syrian representative likes to preach reverently about his support for so-called resistance. Perhaps he can explain how exactly the attack in Haifa, perpetrated by an organization which Syria sponsors, harbours and supports, and which took the lives of so many innocent children and babies, serves as an act of legitimate resistance?

Perhaps he can explain how exactly the attack in Haifa, perpetrated by an organization which Syria sponsors, harbours and supports, which took the lives of so many innocent children and babies, serves as an act of legitimate resistance? Perhaps he can explain how the Syrians themselves have dealt with resistance, as in the case of Hama, where some 10,000 civilians were murdered by Syrian armed forces? Or perhaps he can explain what steps his Government has taken in accordance with Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and the road map itself, which calls on States to cease all support for groups that deliberately murder innocents?

To revive the peace process, and to give the road map a chance to succeed, we cannot absolve State sponsors of terror of their responsibilities to the international community and under international law. The international community must not allow any political gain from a strategy of murder that has brought suffering and despair to all peoples of the region. To do so would only encourage that strategy and push the day of peace further into the future.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): I should like to speak in the exercise of the right of reply with respect to the intervention made by the North Korean representative.

The North Korean representative misunderstands if he thinks that Japan's strong interest in North Korea's nuclear development programme is solely for the sake of siding with the United States. I have to stress that the North Korean nuclear issue is one of the utmost importance for Japan, as it is directly linked to Japanese security. Japan therefore cannot be silenced on this vital issue.

Secondly, the North Korean representative referred to possible compensation issues. I should like to draw his attention to paragraph 2 of the Pyongyang Declaration, which was duly signed by the leaders of both countries and which states:

> "Both sides, pursuant to the basic principle that when the bilateral relationship is normalized, both Japan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would mutually waive all their property and claims and those of their nationals that had arisen from causes which occurred before August 15, 1945, decided that they would discuss this issue of property and claims concretely in the normalization talks."

I should like to emphasize that it is our position to engage in the normalization of diplomatic relations with North Korea through a comprehensive solution of all the outstanding issues, such as the nuclear issue, the missile issue and the abduction issue.

Mr. Nakkari (Syrian Arab Republic) *(spoke in Arabic)*: We were not surprised by the manner in which the Israeli representative began his statement. He immediately condemned all those countries that have already denounced the wanton act of aggression that took place on 5 October against a peaceful Syrian village. That shows a mentality that supposes anyone with different beliefs to be an enemy.

A few days ago, from this very rostrum, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel requested the General Assembly to review its approach and methods of work and to cease adopting resolutions that call on Israel to be committed to international legitimacy. That shows the logic and nature of that entity and the way in which it deals with its neighbours.

The false claims that have been made are not new to this audience, and we regret the fact that we will have to respond to them on yet another occasion.

Israel's supposed concern for peace is hard to believe, since the current Government of Israel is a war Government that has not refrained from killing men, women and children or from demolishing houses and confiscating lands. We have quoted from the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization regarding the suffering of 1.3 million people due to Israeli practices. Those people now live under the poverty line.

The report also notes that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East cannot fulfil its mandate because of the policy of siege and closures. That country knows only war and violence, exports its internal crises to other countries, and has consistently attempted to kill the chance for peace.

The international community had been discussing the possibility of finding a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. But Israel has sabotaged that possibility, and is now trying to compel the world to discount the option of a peaceful solution.

The option of peace as a strategic choice — a choice that has been made by all the countries of the region except Israel. That also was alluded to in the report of the Secretary-General.

Syria also recalls that it has consistently called for a peace based on resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the Madrid framework, the principle of land for peace and other agreements reached by both parties, in addition to the Arab peace initiative presented at the Beirut Arab Summit. These are the same bases that the Secretary-General mentioned in his report.

Other false and misleading claims were made about Syria's occupation of Lebanon. I believe that it is insolent for anyone to make such false claims. These are two peoples, two brotherly Governments, that have agreed on different measures that suit both of them. This is a case in which two Governments are legitimately represented and have chosen freely. The accusations against them are sheer insolence.

With regard to the other allegations made about the Government of Syria, I can say only that the Government commands the respect of the Syrian people. We believe that was the main reason for Israel's act of aggression. We are proud of our leadership and our Government.

Our leadership is as close as can be to the Syrian street's ambitions and to the hearts and minds of the Syrian people. It wants to work for peace, not to be subjected to such horrible acts of aggression. That is what we mean when we say that Israel can export only violence and destruction to its neighbours.

I should like also to recall that it is well known that the democratic Israeli system has been able to elect only war criminals — Yitzhak Shamir was one of the accused in the assassination of Count Bernadotte, a symbol of the United Nations. Is the current Prime Minister of Israel any better? Both of them have been members of organizations such as Hagganah and Stern, two organizations that have spread terror in the region — terror that was unprecedented before Israel existed.

Is occupation not the worst kind of terrorism and oppression — killing children and civilians, bombing them, destroying their houses and shooting missiles at them from fighter jets? In addition, thousands of people have been displaced because of all those acts of aggression.

I should like here to refer once again to the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. I would also like to add that the claim that Syria is responsible for the loss of nineteen lives is baseless and groundless. It attempts to find justification for a Government that is facing serious crises internally and exports them to other countries in the form of false claims.

In Syria, we have more than half a million Palestinian refugees who dream of going back home. Some of them still keep the keys to their homes. Who is denying them the right to return? It is Israel, in a clear and blatant violation of international legitimacy and of all United Nations resolutions, including resolution 194 (III) of the General Assembly.

If Israel considers these half million refugees as a cause of terrorism, then I can simply say that if those people were allowed to return to their homes, the crisis would be solved. Does Israel have the courage to take such a step, to allow them to return to their homes? Geographically, and for all practical purposes, half a million Palestinians who used to have normal lives are now accused of terrorism whatever they do. Even when the press pays attention to them, it is considered by Israel as terrorism.

The President: I call on the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for his second intervention, not to exceed five minutes.

Mr. Kim Chang Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The representative of Japan said that Japan is concerned about the nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula. But I would like to ask Japan, is it not true that Japanese authorities, including ministers, are clamouring for a pre-emptive strike against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea? Is it not true that Japan is revising their so-called peace constitution to endorse aggressive war against neighbouring countries? Is it not true that Japan is reviving militarism? So I can say that the concern for security is of Japan's own making.

Now Japan is suppressing the activities of Chongryon, the General Association for Korean Residents in Japan. Japanese authorities are inciting terrorists to fire guns at the Koreans in Japan. Japanese authorities are conniving to have terrorists plant bombs in Chongryon's buildings. Japanese authorities are hindering the business activities of Koreans in Japan. All these issues are bringing the situation to the point of conflict. As for diplomatic relations, there will be no normalization of relations between Japan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as long as Japan does not compensate us, abrogate its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and correct its betrayal.

The President: I call on the representative of Israel for his second and final intervention of five minutes.

Mr. Mekel (Israel): I regret that I have to exercise my right to a second intervention to reply to the Syrian representative, who today chose to turn this important debate on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit and the report of the Secretary-General into a series of attacks against the State of Israel. And now he pretends to be surprised that he is getting the reply that he deserves.

The Syrian representative claims that Israel attacked a peaceful Syrian village. If that were not so sad, it would be amusing, because it is always very amusing when one sees a wolf in sheep's clothing. Let me say a few words about what Syria is doing about terrorism. First of all, the encouragement, safe harbour, training facilities, funding and logistical support offered by Syria to a variety of notorious terrorist organizations is a matter of public knowledge. Among the many terrorist groups that operate under and benefit from the auspices of the Syrian dictatorship are the Islamic Jihad, Hamas, Hezbollah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. It is well known that the secretary-general of the Islamic Jihad, Ramadan Abdullah Shallah, is one of several terrorist leaders who operate freely in Damascus and receive immunity and support from the Assad regime.

Allow me to briefly detail the extent of support that Syria offers to terrorist organizations. This is what they do: they provide safe harbour and training facilities throughout Syria for terrorist organizations such as Islamic Jihad, Hamas and Hezbollah, both in separate facilities and on Syrian army bases. Syria has

itself facilitated and directed acts of terrorism by coordinating and conducting briefings via phone and the Internet and by calling activists to Damascus for consultations and briefings. Syria uses its State-run media and official institutions to glorify and encourage suicide bombings against civilians in restaurants, schools, commuter buses and shopping malls in the State of Israel. Syria has facilitated the transfer of arms to Palestinian terrorist organizations such as Islamic Jihad by allowing the transfer of sophisticated weapons from Iran to Hezbollah through Syrian territory. These are just a few examples of Syria's complicity with terror.

On the other hand, Israel's measured defensive response to the horrific suicide bombings, directed against the terrorist training facility in Syria, is a clear act of self-defence, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter. This response comes after Israel has exercised tremendous restraint, despite countless acts of terrorism that have claimed hundreds of innocent lives and for which Syria bears direct and criminal responsibility. It comes after Israel and the international community as a whole have repeatedly called on Syria to end its support of terrorism and to finally comply with international law. It is designed to prevent further armed attacks against Israeli civilians in which Syria is complicit, with a view to encouraging Syria to resolve its dispute through bilateral negotiations, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as it legally is required to do.

The President: I call on the representative of Japan for his second and final intervention of five minutes.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): I will be very brief. I will touch on three points.

First, the North Korean representative referred to an imaginary state of affairs, as if we, in Japan, have publicly endorsed a pre-emptive strike, have started revising our Constitution or are reviving the military. I categorically deny these things. Nothing of the sort has happened in Japan.

Secondly, as for our treatment of the Association for North Korean Residents in Japan — Chongryon, if that is what it is called in Korean — I must say that not only this Chongryon but any other group of people or organization in Japan, as long as they are abiding by Japanese law, will continue to enjoy the protection of law and freedom. But if any people or organization, whether Japanese or non-Japanese, violate Japanese law, they will be punished in accordance with the law. This is quite natural.

Thirdly, I would like to repeat that the Pyongyang Declaration was duly signed by the Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Koizumi, and Chairman Kim Jong Il. Given all of the important issues referred to in that Declaration, I would like to suggest to the North Korean representative that he read it very carefully.

The President: I call on the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his second and final intervention of five minutes.

Mr. Nakkari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): We were planning to refrain from taking further part in this polemical exercise, but I am intrigued by the representative of Israel's use of the expression, "The wolf has become the victim". I do not know how many more thousands of Arabs need to die in our region in order for the representative of Israel to consider the situation to be fair and just.

I would like to quote from a story that appeared in the Israeli newspaper, *Maarif*, about 20 children who were playing in an amusement park and suddenly began shouting, "Death to Arabs", while their families looked on with amusement. Another article from the same newspaper states that such scenes are common. The article also reports a conversation between two people who, discussing the fact that 50 people had been killed, expressed the wish that that number had been a hundred.

Rabbi Goldstein and Rabbi Schwinn, who are members of the Israeli organization Neturei Karta, have described the Prime Minister of Israel, Ariel Sharon, as an ugly personification of Zionism. When addressing a group of Arabs, Rabbi Goldstein also said:

> "We would like to say to the Arabs, in particular the Palestinians, that there is no war between them and the Jews. The real Jews have never enjoyed peace and tranquillity except with their Muslim and Christian Arab brothers before the establishment of the Zionist State."

That may give an idea of the true terrorist attitude of Israel — an attitude that has preoccupied the General Assembly and the Security Council for a very long time. Israeli terror against all the countries of the region and its policy of occupation and aggression know no limits, despite the hundreds of resolutions that

have been adopted — resolutions that would not have been renewed in the General Assembly if the settler occupier entity had abided by international law.

With regard to the claims that Syria is harbouring terrorists, I would like to state that in the 1980s we were one of the earliest victims of terrorism while others just looked on. With regard to Hizbullah, I should like to point out that, in a letter contained in document A/56/226 responding to repeated claims by Israel, we stated that the Government of Israel knew very well that Hizbullah is a Lebanese party that works on Lebanese territory, is supported by the Lebanese people and receives no instructions from Syria.

The list of excuses, lies and false claims is endless. The more than 500,000 Palestinians who are in Syria are not terrorists, but ordinary citizens who would like to return home. Yet their presence there is all it takes for the Israeli representative to claim that Syria is harbouring and supporting terrorism. Syria has information and humanitarian offices in Syria that provide services to those needy people — people who have resorted to living in Syrian territory because they are not allowed to live on their own land. We are simply asking that they be allowed to go home.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.

United Nations A/58/PV.27

General Assembly
Fifty-eighth session

Official Records

27th plenary meeting
Thursday, 9 October 2003, 10 a.m.
New York

President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 53 and 54

Report of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the eighth annual report of the International Criminal Tribunal (A/58/140)

Report of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the tenth annual report of the International Tribunal (A/58/297)

The President: I should like to bring to the attention of representatives a technical error in document A/58/297. The formal name of the Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia is quoted wrongly in the document. The name should read as follows: "International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991". A corrigendum to that effect will be issued shortly.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botaru: On behalf of the Secretariat, I should like to apologize for the late issuance of the report of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the eighth annual report of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the tenth annual report of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia?

It was so decided.

The President: I call on Mr. Erik Møse, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

Mr. Møse: It is a great honour to address the Assembly and to present the eighth annual report of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). The report covers the period from 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003, but it also provides an opportunity to take

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

03-54913 (E)

stock of the results during the second four-year mandate of the judges, from 1999 to 2003, under the presidency of my predecessor, Mr. Pillay. I shall also provide an update on the activities during the first four months of the third mandate and indicate some of our projections.

In 2003, the ICTR is harvesting the fruit of the hard work of previous years. So far this year, three judgements, involving four accused, have been handed down. The first judgement this year was delivered in February. Two more judgements followed in May, and another four judgements, involving eight accused, are expected by the end of the year or very early next year. The total number of judgements rendered as a consequence of trials in the second mandate amounts to nine, involving 14 accused. That reflects a 100 per cent increase in the number of accused who have been tried during the Tribunal's second mandate, as compared with during its first mandate, from 1995 to 1999. And it means that soon, the Tribunal will have rendered 15 judgements, involving 21 accused, since the first trials started in January 1997.

Two voluminous trials, involving a total of 10 accused, started in the second mandate and are now continuing. That brings to 31 the total number of accused whose trials have been completed or are in progress. Since the commencement of the third mandate, in June this year, the ICTR has begun two new trials, each with one accused. The Prosecution has already closed its case in those trials. In addition, two trials, each involving four accused, are scheduled to commence in November. Therefore, by the end of 2003, the cases of a total of 41 accused will be completed or in progress. During the period under review, the ICTR Appeals Chamber delivered two judgements. Three Trial Chamber judgements are currently on appeal. Let me also mention that cooperation with the ICTY and its President is excellent.

The commencement of four new trials, involving 10 accused, during the second half of 2003, is a consequence of the election by the Assembly of a pool of 18 ad litem judges in June this year. The first ad litem judge took up office in Arusha on 1 September 2003, and the other three will arrive there in a couple of weeks. Those four ad litem judges will be participating in four trials. I should like to thank the Assembly for making further progress possible.

However, much work remains. At present, 22 detainees are awaiting trial. The ICTR is anxious to commence those cases as soon as it has the capacity to do so. On 29 September 2003, the ICTR requested the Security Council to increase the number of ad litem judges who can sit at any one time from four to nine. I cannot stress enough the importance of that proposal, which will increase the ICTR's capacity from four to six permanent Trial Chamber sections. The ICTR will thus enjoy the same judicial capacity for conducting trials at first instance as that enjoyed by the ICTY. Another significant reform would be to increase the competence of the ad litem judges to do pre-trial work. A request to that effect was submitted to the Security Council in early September. Those two statutory amendments are instrumental to the timely completion of the Tribunal's mandate.

At the commencement of its third mandate, the ICTR has considered it a priority to elaborate a completion strategy. The first version of that document was submitted to United Nations Headquarters in July; it was prepared within the context of General Assembly resolution 57/289. A revised version was sent to the Security Council on 29 September 2003 and will be issued as document S/2003/946. That revised version takes into account Security Council resolution 1503 (2003), in which the Council called on the Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda to take all possible measures to complete all trial activities at first instance by the end of 2008.

In the completion strategy, it is estimated that, with four ad litem judges, ICTR will be in a position to finalize all ongoing trials, together with cases involving the remaining 22 detainees, by 2007. However, by the end of 2008 — the target date set by the Security Council — only about eight other accused could be brought for trial, out of a maximum of 16 indictees who are still at large and a maximum of 26 suspects who have not been apprehended. These projections may have to be revised. Unforeseen circumstances may cause delays. However, with an increase from four to nine ad litem judges, the Tribunal will be in a better position to finalize most trials by the 2008 target date.

In resolution 1503 (2003), the Security Council decided to establish a separate Prosecutor for ICTR. I would like to thank the previous Prosecutor, Ms. Carla Del Ponte, for her great contributions to ICTR. I was also very pleased to welcome the new Prosecutor, Mr. Hassan Jallow, when he took up office in Arusha on 3 October 2003.

During the period under review, a number of reforms were implemented with a view to further improving efficiency. The establishment of a so-called new trials committee, composed of representatives from all three branches of the Tribunal, facilitated the commencement of the four new trials I have just referred to. During trial, valuable time is now saved by the simultaneous interpretation from Kinyarwanda into English and French in all Trial Chambers. That was not previously the case. Moreover, the judges have adopted numerous amendments to the Rules of Procedure and Evidence. Of particular importance was an amendment of Rule 15 *bis*, which makes it possible to continue a trial with a substitute judge where a judge falls ill, dies, resigns or is not re-elected, thereby eliminating the need to commence the trial de novo. This provision has already been applied. Another amendment was the establishment of a procedure to facilitate plea agreements in cases in which an accused has expressed the intention of pleading guilty. In this context, I should draw the Assembly's attention to an important difference between ICTR and ICTY. Only three persons have pleaded guilty at ICTR, whereas the corresponding number at ICTY is 15. Finally, let me mention that proposals from a working group to accelerate the pre-trial proceedings are presently under consideration by the judges.

The Rules have been amended to create a Coordination Council composed of the President, the Prosecutor and the Registrar. This new organ has already served its purpose, which is to facilitate the coordination of the activities of the three ICTR organs.

International criminal justice is necessary, but costly. An important part of the expenses relates to the defence teams. On 20 December 2002, this Assembly adopted resolution 57/289, requesting a report on our Tribunal's legal aid system. A consultant, a British judge, was subsequently appointed to furnish a report and to make recommendations on the improvement of our legal aid system. Based on his very useful document, the Registry recently submitted to United Nations Headquarters its report on the Tribunal's progress in reforming the legal aid programme. Some of the consultant's recommendations have already been acted upon and other proposals are being followed up. I should mention that the experience both at ICTR and ICTY illustrates that there are no easy answers here. ICTR will continue to seek solutions which reduce costs but without curtailing the right to an efficient defence. Let me also pay tribute to defence counsel's contribution to a fair trial within reasonable time.

In 2002, ICTR experienced difficulties over the flow of witnesses from Rwanda. I am now very pleased to report that the situation has improved. For many months, there has been a steady flow of witnesses from Kigali to Arusha. ICTR wants to maintain and develop a harmonious relationship that will make it easier for the Tribunal to contribute to reconciliation within Rwanda. We were recently very pleased to receive two groups of 10 Rwandan judicial officers, each composed of judges, prosecutors and officials from the Ministry of Justice, and we hope that other representatives of Rwandan society will visit the Tribunal soon.

In this connection, allow me to recall that the events of 1994 have given rise to three sets of judicial proceedings. At the national level, the ordinary Rwandan courts have been supplemented by the establishment of so-called *gacaca* courts based on traditional justice, including lay judges, confessions and reconciliation. At the international level, ICTR is hearing trials involving the alleged leaders in 1994. These three proceedings are not mutually exclusive, but supplement each other and can all contribute to justice and reconciliation in Rwanda. Let me also recall that as early as 2000, ICTR expressed support for the principle of compensation, or rather reparation, for victims. The responsibility for processing and assessing claims for such compensation is, however, not a task for the Tribunal. I am pleased to note that this week, the President of the Human Rights Commission, who is presently in Arusha, committed herself to advocating for a special trust fund for victims of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Finally, let me reiterate our appreciation to Benin, Mali and Swaziland for having entered into agreements to enforce sentences handed down by ICTR. Mali has received five convicts. In March 2003, ICTR signed an agreement with France to enforce sentences handed down by the Tribunal. Similar agreements are likely to be concluded with other countries. I also thank all Member States for their cooperation, including in respect of arrests, transfers of indicted persons and travel of witnesses. The Tribunal also thanks the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his continued support.

The President: I call on Mr. Theodor Meron, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

Mr. Meron: It is a great honour for me to address this distinguished Assembly to present the tenth annual report of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Let me first express my profound gratitude for the support that you, the General Assembly, have always afforded the Tribunal.

I would also like to pay tribute to the wisdom and dedication of my predecessor as President of the Tribunal, Claude Jorda of France. Judge Jorda served as President of the Tribunal during much of the period upon which I report to you today.

That period, August 2002 to July 2003, has been one of great progress and accomplishment for the Tribunal. Our Trial Chambers and Appeals Chamber have heard more cases than ever before. An increasing number of defendants have decided to plead guilty, express remorse for their crimes and offer assistance to the Prosecution in other cases. A significant number of important offenders against international humanitarian law have been brought to justice. In pursuance of our strategy to bring the work of the Tribunal to a close in a timely and equitable fashion, we have continued to undertake internal reforms designed to improve the efficiency of our proceedings, while scrupulously observing international norms for due process and fair trial. We have moved ahead with efforts to enable our Tribunal to refer certain cases of mid- and lower-level offenders to courts in the States of the former Yugoslavia, especially the State Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Still, much work remains to be done. We need to do even more to improve the efficiency of our proceedings. We must move forward at full speed with efforts to assist in the establishment of national courts in the region of the former Yugoslavia that are capable of hearing cases of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, fairly and without any taint of ethnic, religious, or national prejudice. We must step up our efforts to ensure that the peoples of the former Yugoslavia receive a balanced and honest account of the work of our Tribunal. And we must push for complete — I repeat, complete — cooperation from all Member States, and especially from the States of the former Yugoslavia, in seeing to it that justice is done for the thousands and thousands of victims of the Yugoslav conflicts who lost their lives, loved ones, property and physical and emotional well-being.

Let me begin by reviewing with you some of the Tribunal's central accomplishments during the past year. The pace of the Tribunal's activities has reached an all-time high. The Tribunal continues to honour the commitments that it made to the Security Council. With morning and afternoon sessions in its three courtrooms, its Trial Chambers conduct between four and six trials at a time. During the year in review, they examined 29 cases on their merits as well as three cases of contempt and rendered four final judgments on the merits or sentencing judgments.

The trial of Slobodan Milosevic, former head of State of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, continued before Trial Chamber III. The defendant's health has led to a great number of delays, and it is, I would like the Assembly to know, an extraordinarily complex case. It brings together what had been three separate indictments, for Kosovo, Croatia and Bosnia, with 66 counts, hundreds of witnesses, tens of thousands of pages of documents, most of which must be translated from Serbo-Croatian into English and French, the Tribunal's working languages. But the Prosecution's case is coming to a close soon, and the timetable for the defence case has begun to be established.

The Appeals Chamber, too, has disposed of a greater number of appeals than in years past. During the period under consideration, the Appeals Chamber disposed of 36 interlocutory appeals, two requests for review, and two contempt proceedings, and handed down one judgement on the merits.

The Trial Chambers also received an increasing number of guilty pleas resulting from plea agreements, including from Biljana Plavsic, former Co-President of the Republika Srpska. A total of 16 have now pleaded guilty at the ICTY. I recognize that because of the egregious nature of the crimes charged before the ICTY, and because the Tribunal's roles include providing some vindication for the victims and contributing to the creation of an accurate record of terrible atrocities, some are hesitant about a too-frequent recourse to plea agreements. These concerns are certainly understandable and legitimate. But I believe that, with properly-detailed acknowledgement by defendants of their participation in the crimes for which they acknowledge guilt and make genuine expressions of remorse, plea agreements can play a constructive role.

In some cases, a forthright and specific acknowledgement of guilt may offer victims as much, or even more, consolation than would a conviction

following repeated protestations of innocence. Moreover, as a practical matter, the cooperation secured through plea agreements, which of course are not binding on the Tribunal, plays an important role in securing convictions of more important participants in the large-scale crimes, and the time and resources saved by avoiding trials in some cases contributes significantly to the Tribunal's ability to meet the time lines indicated by the Security Council for the completion of its work.

With those deadlines in mind, the Tribunal has worked hard this past year to advance its completion strategy, a plan of internal reforms and external initiatives designed to enable the Tribunal to finish its work within the deadlines set by the Security Council.

Internally, we have undertaken a series of judicially initiated reforms designed to improve the efficiency of our proceedings. The most important of these was the removal of the ban on ad litem judges adjudicating in pre-trial matters. At my urging, and in accordance with an earlier recommendation by my predecessor, Judge Claude Jorda, the Security Council, on 19 May 2003, unanimously adopted resolution 1481 (2003), amending the Tribunal's Statute to permit ad litem judges to undertake pre-trial work. This reform enables ad litem judges to make more efficient use of their time and to enhance their already important contribution to the work of the Tribunal, thus helping it to bring cases to completion more expeditiously.

At plenary meetings in December 2002 and July 2003, the judges adopted a number of amendments to the Tribunal's rule of procedure designed to improve efficiency. One revises the methods for permitting continuation of trials when one of the judges hearing the case is unable to continue, thus reducing the risk of mistrials and retrials. Another gives Trial Chambers enhanced authority to restrict the scope of the prosecution's case, thus avoiding the presentation of redundant and unnecessarily time-consuming evidence.

Externally, the past year has seen a major advance for the completion strategy through the advancement of a plan to create a special war crimes chamber in the State Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The establishment of the war crimes chamber in Sarajevo will provide a forum to which the Tribunal may transfer a number of cases of lower- and mid-level accused. In anticipation of the Chamber's creation, the Tribunal judges amended rule 11 *bis* at a special plenary meeting in September 2002 to set out the criteria that must be satisfied before a case may be referred to a domestic court once an indictment has been confirmed.

After months of negotiation, in February 2003 President Jorda entered into an agreement with the Office of the High Representative (OHR) for the establishment of the new chamber. In August, the Security Council added its imprimatur through the adoption of resolution 1503 (2003). A donors' conference will be held on 30 October at the Tribunal in The Hague, and a series of working groups composed of personnel from OHR, the Tribunal and other interested organizations will develop the detailed policies needed to get the War Crimes Chamber running.

While the completion strategy has made major strides in the past year, I look forward to equally important developments in the year ahead. First, as the Security Council made clear in resolution 1503 (2003), the completion strategy requires a further focusing of the Tribunal's mission on trying the most significant offenders against international public order. The Prosecutor, of course, possesses the authority to select the individuals who will be charged before the Tribunal. Thus, it is primarily the Prosecutor's responsibility to ensure compliance with the Security Council's direction that the Tribunal concentrate on the prosecution and trial of the most senior leaders suspected of being most responsible for crimes within the Tribunal's jurisdiction.

While we are striving in every way possible to meet the goals of completing all trials by the end of 2008 and all appeals by the end of 2010, one cannot predict with scientific accuracy the completion date of judicial proceedings. Many factors may affect the outcome. Some of those influences are within the control of the Tribunal, others not; and of the former, some are within the control of the judges and others within the power of the Prosecutor.

I am happy to report that we should be able to complete the trials of all individuals currently in the custody of the Tribunal, including those on provisional release — both individuals whose trials have already begun and individuals who are in pre-trial proceedings — by the 2008 deadline.

Already confirmed indictments cover an additional 17 individuals who are at large. The sooner fugitives are turned in, the greater the number of guilty

pleas that will be received; and the greater the number of cases that can be transferred to Sarajevo, the sooner we will be able to finish the trials of these cases. Subject to a variety of circumstances, it may be possible to complete the trials of some indicted fugitives within the time frame established for the 2008 deadline, but it will not be possible to complete them all by that time.

The handing over of fugitives, of course, is outside the Tribunal's control. It depends above all on the cooperation of the States of the former Yugoslavia. I join my predecessors in urging the Assembly to press all Member States to cooperate fully and promptly with the Tribunal's work.

I recently travelled to Belgrade on the first ever official visit there by the Tribunal's President, and I am encouraged by an emerging spirit of cooperation with the Tribunal. This is a good beginning. But much remains to be done — on arrests of fugitives, access to evidence and facilitation of witness testimony, especially by present and former officials.

I must tell the Assembly that, based on current projections, it will not be possible to accommodate new indictments within the time frame indicated by the Council. I say this while fully recognizing that it is the Prosecutor's prerogative to select the individuals against whom she will file indictments and that if the Prosecution has sufficient evidence to make a prima facie case, we judges must confirm the indictments. One thing must be clear, however: once indictments have been submitted and confirmed by the judges, the legal process will have started, and will have to run its course, in accordance with the governing law and the demands of due process. A strict application of the target dates for the completion strategy must not — I repeat, must not — result in impunity, particularly for the most senior leaders suspected of being most responsible for the crimes within the Tribunal's jurisdiction.

Secondly, as I noted a moment ago, with respect to the Sarajevo War Crimes Chamber, we are moving from plans to action. We should be able to begin transferring some cases by 2005.

Thirdly, we are continuing to search for ways to streamline our procedures. I have revitalized a committee of judges called the Judicial Practices Working Group, giving it a mandate to develop and analyse proposals to shorten trials and speed the hearing of appeals. The Prosecutor has recently circulated a group of proposals with the same goal in mind, and the judges are actively considering and reshaping a number of them. The Rules Committee of the judges has some of these proposals submitted by the Prosecutor under active consideration. The Committee will recommend a package of reforms aimed at improving the rules of disclosure, pre-trial management and presentation of evidence to the judges during the regular plenary meeting in December. The purpose is to balance the interests of the Prosecutor and the accused so that the task of the former is manageable, while the rights of the latter to a fair trial remain protected.

Ten years ago, the Security Council created the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia with the goal of putting an end to impunity for mass atrocities and serious violations of international humanitarian law. During the past decade, with the constant support of the Assembly, the Tribunal has made a fundamental and lasting contribution to bringing justice to the peoples of the former Yugoslavia by holding to account a considerable number of accused of high rank.

Ensuring that justice is done requires skilful work, on the part not only of the Tribunal's judges, but also of its staff. It will be more and more difficult — particularly as the completion of the Tribunal's work comes into sight — to retain and attract staff of the highest calibre unless opportunities for advancement are made available. The creation of additional criminal jurisdictions creates additional pressure in this regard. I hope that the members of the Assembly and of the Security Council will recognize the importance of this issue and support our proposals to address it.

Let me conclude by saying that if we are to complete our mission in a timely fashion, we must have the support, not only of this Assembly as a collective body, but also of each and every one of its members, especially the States of the former Yugoslavia. Fugitives must be arrested, above all Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, as well as Ante Gotovina. Evidence must be turned over promptly. Only then will the Tribunal be able to complete the important mission assigned to it by the Security Council a decade ago.

Mr. Mustapha (Malaysia): I should like first of all to congratulate Judge Erik Møse on his recent appointment as the new President of the International

Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). I commend Judge Erik Møse and Judge Theodor Meron, the President of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), on their introduction of the reports of the two Tribunals.

Malaysia fully appreciates the achievements made, and the difficulties faced by, the two Tribunals, as reflected in the reports before us. We commend the members of the Chambers, the Prosecution and the Registry for their hard work and for their contributions.

The Tribunals have a significant role in promoting the rule of law and in ensuring that the principles of justice and equality are upheld. The importance of the work of the Tribunals in the fight against impunity for the most serious crimes against humanity is not to be underestimated. The Tribunals demonstrate that genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law will not be tolerated and that the perpetrators of such crimes must face retribution. The Tribunals contribute to the essential process of making the international criminal justice system effective, and induce States to fulfil their responsibilities in bringing to justice people who have committed despicable acts and atrocities against other people.

We acknowledge the fact that the high-quality judgments and decisions of the Tribunals have contributed, and will continue to contribute, to the development of international jurisprudence related to international criminal prosecution. Undoubtedly, case law developed by the Tribunals will also further augment case law on international humanitarian law in respect of procedure, competence and substantive issues. This, in turn, will pave the way for the future work of the International Criminal Court.

I will first comment on the activities of the ICTR.

We are pleased to note the continued efficiency in the operations of the ICTR and the improvements made that have enabled it to accelerate its work. The availability of simultaneous translation and the changes made to the rules of procedure and evidence to facilitate proceedings are among the welcome improvements that will indeed contribute to avoiding needlessly lengthy trials. We recognize that extreme care has been taken to balance efficiency in expediting trials with fair trial procedure.

We deem timely the creation of the Coordination Council, to facilitate coordination of the three organs of the Tribunal; the Management Committee, to supervise Registry activities relating to administrative and judicial support to the Chambers and judges; and the External Relations and Strategic Planning Section, to enhance the cooperation between the Tribunal and Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations. Their creation will undoubtedly enhance the Tribunal's judicial capacity and its ability to fulfil its mandate.

The election of the pool of 18 ad litem judges for the Tribunal took place on 25 June 2003. Among the newly elected ad litem judges is a distinguished former member of the Malaysian judiciary who is ready and able to assist the Tribunal. Malaysia once again extends its appreciation to Members of the United Nations for having elected him to that position. We believe that the ad litem judges will allow the Tribunal remarkably to increase its judicial productivity and to meet the demands of the anticipated rise in the number of cases.

We note the restriction faced by the Tribunal in availing itself of the pool of ad litem judges. We hope that the Security Council will take cognizance of the problems faced by the Tribunal in this regard and take appropriate steps to address them. We believe that the Tribunal must be given the opportunity fully to utilize the pool of ad litem judges as it deems reasonable, fit and necessary. The Tribunal must be in a position to undertake its tasks efficiently, so that detainees are spared undue delays in the completion of their trials.

The adoption of Security Council resolution 1505 (2003) on 4 September 2003 marked an important development in the history of the ICTR. Indeed, the splitting of the prosecutorial duties for the ICTR and the ICTY — which had previously been under one Prosecutor, Ms. Carla Del Ponte — was essential at a time when both Tribunals were moving towards their respective completion strategies. That move will enable the respective prosecutors to focus their attention on the conduct of outstanding investigations and prosecutions. We wish to thank Ms. Del Ponte for her significant contribution to the work of the ICTR. We also congratulate Mr. Hassan Bubacar Jallow on his appointment as the new Prosecutor of the ICTR.

The Prosecution's constant revision and reforms to meet its targets in fulfilling the mandate of the Tribunal is commendable. They will facilitate further progress in the work of the Prosecution. In this regard, we note that the Prosecution has identified 40 suspects

and intends to defer their prosecution to national jurisdictions. That move will pave the way for the Tribunal fully to concentrate on trying those who bear the greatest responsibility for crimes committed. However, caution must be exercised in implementing this arrangement, so as to ensure that no perpetrator goes unpunished.

It is critical to the success of the Tribunal that the people of the region be informed of its work and comprehend its significance. We appreciate the perseverance of the Registrar in promoting greater awareness of the Tribunal and in engaging the interest and support of the local population, the States of the region and the international community. We encourage him to continue his efforts. We are also pleased to note the continued success of the outreach programme, as well as gender and victims assistance programmes.

I would now in turn comment on the activities of the ICTY. Malaysia is mindful that the process of achieving justice may take many years. At the same time, we are always reminded of the saying, "justice delayed is justice denied". The ICTY is now in its eleventh year of existence. The reform process of the Tribunal, initiated to speed up the process of meting out justice is proceeding smoothly. My delegation is pleased to note that, to date, the Tribunal has indicted 74 individuals, 56 of whom are currently in proceedings before the Tribunal and 51 in detention. The Tribunal had also completed 35 cases. We appreciate the work done so far.

However, we note with great concern that 17 individuals are still at large. The delayed apprehension of these individuals, in particular the major and earliest indicted war criminals, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, should be a matter of serious concern to the international community. They must be apprehended and brought to justice. Those concerned must use every means to achieve this objective. The mandate of the Tribunal will not be complete if they remain at large and are not brought to trial. In this connection, the commitment by the countries in the region to genuine cooperation with the Tribunal in handing over indicted war criminals believed to be in their territories is critical. The countries concerned must meet without hesitation the call for cooperation by the Prosecutor. Otherwise, the completion strategy of the ICTY will be delayed.

The mandate and objectives of the ICTR and ICTY will only be achieved with the fullest cooperation of the international community, particularly the countries in the regions concerned. Needless to say, the sustained commitment by the major Powers will also be crucial. The consequences of ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity that were perpetrated in Rwanda and the Balkans must be repaired through justice. Such heinous crimes must not be tolerated and must never be allowed to happen again. Without justice there can be no genuine peace. In reiterating its fullest support for both the Tribunals, Malaysia calls, once again, on the international community to give its unreserved support to the ICTR and ICTY in carrying out their respective mandates.

Mr. Kusljugić (Bosnia and Herzegovina): Bosnia and Herzegovina welcomes the report that the President of the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) submitted to the Secretary-General. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank both President Judge Meron and Chief Prosecutor Del Ponte for the outstanding efforts they make to bring justice, which will contribute to the reconciliation process in my country.

Bosnia and Herzegovina fully supports the ICTY's activities and is committed to fulfil its obligations related to cooperation with the Tribunal. We are committed to stay the course for the strategy of success that has been defined to overcome, as soon as possible, the difficult legacy of the past and to start building, with mutual understanding, a modern Bosnia and Herzegovina. Only in that way may we pass along to future generations a message of a world of peace and development, based on mutual understanding and tolerance.

We consider that the Tribunal plays an important role in the process of inter-ethnic reconciliation in the country as well as in South-East Europe, since its work is based upon establishing individual responsibility for the war crimes. We also believe that the work of the ICTY will reveal new evidence regarding the atrocities committed between 1992 and 1995, thus providing new facts about the true nature of the conflict in the region.

We stress that in the past, the responsible institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in cooperation with the experts of the Office of the High Representative, have made measurable progress, especially in the process of restructuring the Bosnia and Herzegovina court systems at all levels. The new Legal Reform Unit, High Judicial and Prosecutorial Councils and Special Chamber in the State Court, as

well as the Special Department in the Prosecutor's Office in the country, are now functioning. Together with the Criminal Code, which entered into force on 1 March 2003, the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina is now operative. This will enable the ICTY to begin to transfer some mid- and low-level cases of the accused by the end of next year. However, we expect that the apprehension and trial of the most notorious offenders will remain the continuing responsibility of the United Nations and the international community.

Bosnia and Herzegovina trusts that the ICTY will take every possible measure to complete investigations by the end of 2004, all activities of the Court of First Instance by the end of 2008 and all work in 2010, as decided in Security Council resolution 1503 (2003) of 28 August. In order to better meet the requirements of Security Council resolutions with regard to the work of the ICTY, especially resolution 1503 (2003), Bosnia and Herzegovina is fully committed to fulfil all its obligations and is ready to cooperate with the responsible authorities of the countries of the region in apprehending all remaining persons at large who have been indicted by the ICTY. Bosnia and Herzegovina expresses its hope that, as part of the completion strategy, the international community will assist the national judicial system by improving its capacity to prosecute cases transferred to it from the ICTY. Bosnia and Herzegovina expects that the ICTY will develop and improve its outreach programmes as well.

The war criminals who remain at large are a continuing source of instability in the region. We underline that lasting and stable peace in the region will not be achieved unless all suspected war criminals, including the two most notorious, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, are brought to justice.

I would like to take this opportunity to urge the Member States to provide all necessary technical, financial and political support for the forthcoming preparatory activities, as well as the contributing nations to pledge their generous support at the donors conference, to be held on 30 October in The Hague, in order to enable the Special Chamber in the State Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina to become fully operative as soon as possible.

Mr. Mantovani (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia; the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey; and the European Free Trade Association countries, members of the European Economic Area, Iceland and Liechtenstein, declare that they align themselves with this statement.

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), through its work, has made and continues to make a substantial contribution to the replacement of a culture of impunity by a culture of accountability, thus playing an important role in the process of national reconciliation in Rwanda and in the maintenance of peace and security in the region. Together with the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the Rwanda Tribunal has been contributing to the development of international criminal law. The two ad hoc Tribunals represent a cornerstone in the universal affirmation of the principle that, in the words of the Secretary-General,

> "there can be no healing without peace; there can be no peace without justice; and there can be no justice without respect for human rights and the rule of law".

With great satisfaction, the European Union takes note of the recent efforts of the Tribunal. In the past year, nine trials, involving 23 accused, have been conducted, while judgements have been delivered in three cases involving four accused. The European Union therefore would like strongly to reaffirm its full support for ICTR, its work and its mandate as one of the main tools of our collective determination to bring peace to societies disrupted by atrocious conflicts.

We are all aware, of course, that, since its inception, ICTR has faced a number of practical difficulties which have rendered the performance of its tasks at times not easy and burdensome. In addition, the complexity of the cases, the need for voluminous disclosure and translation of documents, the transportation of witnesses from all parts of the world and the availability of witnesses — all these facts contribute to the disappointingly slow pace of trials at ICTR to date.

However, the Tribunal has put considerable effort into overcoming the many obstacles that it has encountered so far and has adopted a number of measures aimed at expediting pre-trial and trial proceedings. In particular, the progress and advancements achieved in the Tribunal's work over the past year are described in the new annual report submitted by its President, whom the European Union

would like warmly to thank for his work. The European Union takes this opportunity to welcome the new President of ICTR, Judge Erik Møse, and to thank the former President, Judge Navanethem Pillay — now judge of the International Criminal Court — for the accomplishment of her duties and wishes them both every success in their new endeavours.

The European Union further welcomes the election on 25 June 2003, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1431 (2002), of a pool of 18 ad litem judges and the fact that a number of them have already been called to work on some of the Tribunal's cases. At the same time, the European Union recommends increasing — as underlined in the report of the President of the Court — the number of ad litem judges as soon as possible in order to ensure a timely completion of ICTR's mandate. Furthermore, the amendment of the Statute must lead to an increase of judicial output and contribute to the overall completion strategy. The European Union reiterates the importance of ICTR's making every effort to respect the deadlines of the completion strategy — namely, 2004 for the completion of investigations, 2008 for the completion of trials and 2010 for the completion of appeals.

All the branches of the Tribunal have demonstrated continued dedication in their work, in particular the Prosecutor. During the period under review, the Prosecutor's Office has continued to implement its strategy in investigating new cases and preparing some of the most complex cases for trial, in view of the timely completion of the assigned task.

By its resolution 1503 (2003), the Security Council further decided to amend the Statute of the Tribunal in order to split the positions of Prosecutor of ICTY and the Prosecutor of ICTR with a view to easing the prosecutorial workload in the implementation of those Tribunals' respective completion strategies. The European Union would like to express its highest appreciation for the efficient and knowledgeable work done by Ms. Carla Del Ponte, former Chief Prosecutor of both Tribunals, and to express its strong support for her future commitment as Prosecutor of ICTY. The European Union also welcomes the prompt appointment of Mr. Hassan Bubacar Jallow as Prosecutor of the Rwanda Tribunal and wishes him well in his new position. The European Union calls on the Presidents and Prosecutors of ICTY and ICTR to continue their cooperation in order to maximize the efficient use of the intellectual and financial resources of the two Tribunals.

Any efforts aimed at improving the Tribunal's work and completion of its mandate within the established time frame are bound to bring no results if cooperation from the States concerned is not guaranteed. For this purpose, it remains crucial for ICTR to obtain adequate facilities and full cooperation from these States whenever required, with particular attention to access to military information and to collaboration in securing the appearance in Court of prosecution witnesses. The European Union in particular calls on the Rwandan authorities to ensure that they facilitate, to the fullest extent possible, the performance of the Tribunal's mandate and the determination of responsibilities for crimes committed in Rwanda in 1994 for which the Tribunal is competent.

While recognizing that room for improvement still exists and that further measures can be taken either to remedy perceived problems or to increase further the efficiency of the Tribunal, the European Union trusts that, due to recent innovations in its structure and working methods, as well as to the hard work of all its staff, the Tribunal will be able to continue to make steady and successful progress towards the timely fulfilment of its mandate.

I turn now to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. The European Union has, on a number of occasions, stressed that it attaches the highest importance to the principle that there must be no impunity for those responsible for the most heinous crimes. The European Union wishes to take the opportunity of today's meeting to reaffirm its strong belief in international criminal justice and in the contribution that that can bring to the peace and security of relations among States. The ICTY, through the work of its Courts and its outreach activities, has made a valuable contribution to reconciliation in the former Yugoslavia. The European Union therefore once again reaffirms its support for the Tribunal and commends its entire staff for their efforts to bring justice to victims of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The European Union welcomes the tenth annual report of the Tribunal's President and praises the developments and improvements achieved during the past year. The European Union would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the new President of the

ICTY, Judge Theodor Meron, and to express its appreciation to the former President, Judge Claude Jorda, now a Judge of the International Criminal Court, for the accomplishment of his duties. We wish both of them every success in their new endeavours.

In addition to its recent activity that led to the successful conclusion of several cases, the Tribunal has pressed forward with plans to improve its efficiency, involving essentially a two-pronged strategy of both internal and external reforms. Notably, the European Union welcomes the most important internal reform, removal of the prohibition on ad litem judges adjudicating in pre-trial proceedings. In May, the Security Council unanimously adopted its resolution 1481 (2003), amending the Tribunal's Statute so as to enhance the powers of ad litem judges in that regard. That reform will undoubtedly maximize the Court's use of available judicial resources and increase judicial output at the pre-trial stage; it will be an important tool in the finalization of the ICTY's completion strategy. The European Union reiterates that it is important that the ICTY make every effort to respect the deadlines of the completion strategy: namely, 2004 for the completion of investigations, 2008 for the completion of trials and 2010 for the completion of appeals.

Prosecutorial activities have intensified with a view to achieving the goals of the completion strategy. In that context, as I have already stated, the Secretary-General has concluded that the two Prosecutors' offices, for the ICTY and for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), generate too high a workload for only one person to deal with. As a result, the Security Council — as the Assembly is already aware — has decided that, in order for both Tribunals to effectively carry out their mandates in the final phase of their existence, each of them will need one dedicated Prosecutor. In that context, the European Union, as a sign of its highest appreciation for the excellent work Prosecutor Del Ponte has carried out, has fully endorsed her re-election for a full mandate as ICTY Prosecutor. The European Union calls on the Presidents and Prosecutors of the ICTY and the ICTR to continue their cooperation to maximize the efficient use of the intellectual and financial resources of the two Tribunals.

Regarding the external component of its completion strategy, the European Union supports the efforts to establish a special Chamber for war crimes prosecutions — a "War Crimes Chamber" — in the State Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina and welcomes the cooperation between the ICTY and the Office of the High Representative in that respect. The European Union reiterates its appeal to the Tribunal to ensure that the necessary standards of fair trial, independence and full respect for human rights are also respected within trials in national courts and takes note with appreciation of the activities undertaken to that end, particularly the establishment of the Association of Defence Counsel, in September 2002.

It has been emphasized many times that the success of the Tribunal in the discharge of its mandate depends largely on full cooperation on the part of States and on their willingness to implement its decisions and orders. Although the situation has improved in a number of aspects, the Tribunal continues to encounter obstacles and resistance. In that regard, the European Union, recalling the pledge to cooperate fully and unequivocally with the ICTY, made by the countries of the region at the European Union-Western Balkans Summit, held at Thessaloniki in June 2003, calls upon them to improve their cooperation with respect to the arrest and transfer of indictees still at large, requests for documents, access to archives and the ready availability of witnesses. It reiterates the need to intensify efforts to transfer Radovan Karadjic, Ratko Mladic and Ante Gotovina to the ICTY for trial. The European Union reaffirms that full cooperation with the ICTY on the part of the countries of the Western Balkans remains an essential element of the European Union's Stabilization and Association Process. Failure to cooperate fully with the ICTY would seriously jeopardize further movement towards the European Union.

The European Union, assuring both Courts of its full support, wishes to thank all the branches of the Tribunals — the Chambers, the Registries and the Offices of the Prosecutors — for their essential contribution to the culture of justice and the rule of law.

Mr. Lovald (Norway): Let me begin by expressing our full recognition of the achievements and the high standards of the International Tribunals for Rwanda and the Former Yugoslavia, as reflected in various judgements as well as in the reports before us. We should like to thank the Presidents of the Tribunals for their detailed annual reports, which in our view accurately reflect the progress made during the period under review.

First, let me take this opportunity to welcome the new Presidents, Judge Theodor Meron and Judge Erik Møse, and to thank the former Presidents, Judge Jorda and Judge Pillay — both now judges of the International Criminal Court — for the accomplishment of their duties. We wish all of them every success in their new endeavours. I also congratulate the two Prosecutors: Ms. Carla Del Ponte, on her reappointment, and Mr. Hassan Bubacar Jallow, who began his four-year mandate as the Prosecutor for the Rwanda Tribunal on 15 September. We assure them of our full confidence, support and cooperation.

While the work of the Tribunals has been aimed principally at contributing to peace and security in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, they have a broader significance as well. The Tribunals represent historic first steps towards ending the tradition of impunity for mass atrocities by establishing effective systems of international criminal law. The work of the Tribunals has become a widely recognized contribution to the search for truth and the fight against impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern; thus it can also assist in the process of rebuilding civil society under the rule of law. The judgements delivered by the Tribunals are essential contributions to jurisprudence in the field of international criminal law. The continuing work of the ad hoc Tribunals also paves the way for the work of the International Criminal Court.

During the period under review, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) has continued its efforts to avoid needless consumption of time. The measures implemented by the Tribunal to better streamline the conduct of business so that capacity is utilized to the maximum have yielded tangible results.

Bearing in mind the resources required to try the most serious international crimes, we are impressed and encouraged by the fact that the total result of the Tribunal's second mandate aims at doubling the number of accused who have been tried, compared to the first mandate. It is the responsibility of every Member State to help the Tribunal continue this progress.

The timely completion of the Tribunal's mandate is also dependent upon added resources. We are therefore very pleased that the Security Council reached agreement on resolution 1431 (2002) in August, with a view to creating a pool of ad litem judges. Norway welcomes the successful election of the 18 ad litem judges in June 2003, but it regrets the fact that only four ad litem judges can sit at any one time. We have previously stated concerns about certain financial and management issues, mainly related to defence counsel and legal aid. We have noted the Tribunal's efforts to improve the legal aid programme in order to ensure the efficient use of resources and the protection of the integrity of the Tribunals' judicial process. We look forward to the forthcoming external consultant report on fee assessment, which, hopefully, will provide recommendations on how to establish a new system of payment acceptable to all.

The pace of activities of the Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia has also reached an all-time high during the period under review. Both internal and external reforms have been successfully implemented, leading to a remarkable increase in its judicial activity, thanks not in the least to the additional nine ad litem judges. We warmly welcomed in May the adoption of Security Council resolution 1481 (2003), enhancing the powers of the ad litem judges by naming them to adjudicate over pre-trial matters. The ad litem judges can now make more efficient use of their time and enhance their already-important contribution to the work of the Tribunal, thus helping it to bring cases to completion more expeditiously.

To a large extent, the success of the Tribunals in the discharge of their mandates depends on the support of Member States. We therefore regret that problems relating to international cooperation have continued to be an obstacle to the Tribunals in the completion of their mandates. Positive signals from Rwandan authorities in that respect are indeed promising. Without bringing the highest-ranking indictees to justice, the essential mission of the Tribunals will remain unfulfilled. We reiterate the need to intensify efforts to bring Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic to the ICTY. All States must now recognize their non-negotiable duty to cooperate with the Tribunals, in accordance with the binding decisions of the Security Council.

The Norwegian Government has demonstrated its willingness to consider applications from the ICTY concerning the enforcement of sentences, and subsequently, in conformity with national laws, to receive a limited number of convicted persons to serve their sentences in Norway. We encourage other States to prove their continued commitment to the work of the Tribunals through concrete action in this crucial field.

Let me conclude by reiterating our satisfaction with the remarkable achievements of the Tribunals during the period covered by the present report. We recognize, however, the hard work that lies ahead. Members must rest assured that we will stand by our longstanding commitment to the Tribunals to successfully complete the mission assigned to them by the Security Council.

Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia): A decade ago the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) was created with the purpose of restoring and maintaining peace in the war-torn areas of the former Yugoslavia by putting an end to grave violations of international humanitarian law and bringing to justice the persons responsible for them. Moreover, one of the ICTY's earlier reports elegantly embodies the far-reaching meaning of the Tribunal's work when it states that the Tribunal performs the role of justice and memory. That definition of purpose further underscores the need for keeping ICTY activities in line with the sensibility of States under its jurisdiction for the benefit of the historical record that shall be established through the Tribunal's jurisprudence. That record is equally important, as is the obligation to serve law and administer justice.

As part of its authority to transcend national borders in the prosecution of war crimes, while giving primacy to individual rights over State sovereignty, the establishment of the ICTY was a far-reaching step forward in expanding the boundaries of international law. The establishment of the Tribunal has sent a powerful message: nobody is above the law, regardless of whether one is a high-level official or a simple soldier; whether one is a war hero or a ruthless dictator. This principle was best exemplified in the indictment and trial of Slobodan Milosevic, the first head of State to be charged for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide before an international tribunal, and the main culprit for the war and the destruction and unspeakable suffering it brought to the area of the former Yugoslavia during the last decade of the past century.

In establishing an extensive judicial record in the uncharted waters of international criminal adjudication, the Tribunal, together with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), continues to contribute to the development of humanitarian law, thereby creating a founding legacy for the future work of the newly established International Criminal Court (ICC).

As much as we praise the ICTY's importance and accomplishments, as it continues to carry out its laudable mission, we also have to recognize some of its shortcomings. The Tribunal is above national laws, but it should not be above well-founded criticism. Acknowledgement of the Tribunal's deficiencies is an essential step towards the perfection of its work.

Utmost efficiency still cannot be easily associated with the ICTY, although an important improvement was recently achieved. With a growing budget that exceeds $1 billion per year, it is proving very expensive. Its trials are removed from the countries and communities where the war crimes were perpetrated, thus at times failing to produce a full impact on the local communities. Over the years, moreover, a number of procedural flaws have had to be corrected through repeated interventions regarding rules of procedure.

Regarding the aforesaid, I would like to draw Members' attention to two practical issues. As we know, not all the indicted persons before the Tribunal were found guilty. Cases of acquittal demonstrate impartiality and efficiency of justice. At the same time, the denial of an effective mechanism allowing for compensation risks the impairment of an important aspect of the acquitted person's rights. Croatia believes, therefore, that the jurisdiction of the Tribunal should be broadened by putting in place the appropriate procedure that would enable it to award compensation to wrongly convicted, prosecuted or detained persons.

As for the enforcement of sentences, one has to raise the following question: to what extent does serving a sentence in States very far from the former Yugoslavia, sometimes in a very different socio-cultural environment, appear to be in line with international instruments that require prisoners to be imprisoned reasonably near their usual place of residence? The existing instruction, dating from 1993, envisaged the enforcement of sentences outside the area of the former Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, we would like to use this opportunity to reiterate our request to the Secretary-General to review the instructions of his predecessor regarding these arrangements, so as to allow for the serving of sentences in the countries of the region, including Croatia.

Certain interpretations by the Prosecutor of the historical background and political genesis of the conflict in the area of the former Yugoslavia, as well as of the character of the consequent military operations, appears not to be fully in line with the General

Assembly resolution on the occupied territories of Croatia and the spirit of several important Security Council resolutions. The same could be said of some of the indictments. It is of the utmost importance not to send the wrong message about the primary causes of the war carnage during the nineties. Unfortunately, some of the indictments are perceived by those who lived and suffered through the war in the former Yugoslavia as a distortion of reality when it comes to the true architects of war crimes in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In spite of the imperfections of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), it must surely be commended for its work and achievements. Croatia joins those who salute the ICTY and its tireless efforts to bring to justice all those responsible for war crimes in the area of the former Yugoslavia, regardless of their national or ethnic background.

In recent years, the international community's preference has shifted towards different types of international criminal tribunals, as in Sierra Leone or Cambodia. This practice should be pursued further. These so-called mixed-type tribunals are not only closer to grass-roots level communities where the crimes were committed, but are also composed partially of local jurists. However, any form of ad hoc jurisdiction that comes into being only after the outbreak of crimes is nothing but a palliative. We therefore hope that the International Criminal Court (ICC), as a permanent supranational structure with prospective and non-selective jurisdiction, will grow into a powerful guardian of human rights in times of conflict, deterring future crimes and obviating the need for ad hoc adjudication.

The ICTY's completion strategy, formalized by recent Security Council resolution 1503 (2003), brings us a step closer to the efficient and successful achievement of the Tribunal's mission. We are encouraged by the important reforms that the Tribunal has undertaken in order to conduct its operations within a precise timetable. Their effect can already be felt in the intensified trial activities.

Against this background, we also welcome the separation of mandates of the Prosecutors of the ICTY and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). This should contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of these Tribunals, since two Prosecutors can devote undivided attention and energy to the organization, oversight, management and conduct of the outstanding investigations and prosecutions. Respecting the benchmarks — such as the completion of all investigations by the end of 2004 and coming up with a final number of new indictments by that date — is not only a question of the effective administration of justice, but also not a small contribution to the prevention of potentially harmful political tensions in the countries concerned.

We are fully aware of the critical importance of full cooperation with the ICTY for the successful completion of its tasks. Croatia will continue to offer unreserved concrete support and provide all the necessary assistance requested by the ICTY and the Office of the Prosecutor. It will undertake, within its own borders, all measures required to prosecute perpetrators of war crimes, insofar as they are within the reach of its judicial system.

As for the outstanding indictment against retired General Ante Gotovina, who is still at large, the Government keeps the Office of the Prosecutor regularly updated on the activities it has been undertaking to discover his whereabouts. Consistent with the Rules of Procedure and Evidence of the Court, on 6 October this year, the Government of Croatia submitted its third report pursuant to rule 59 of the Court, describing the actions undertaken in order to execute the warrant of arrest.

When it comes to the issue of cooperation between the ICTY and Croatia, I can inform the Assembly that there are no outstanding problems in gaining prompt access to specific documents for the purposes of the ICTY's proceedings. The recent visit of the Special Prosecutor to Croatia confirmed that.

In regard to the report of the ICTY contained in document A/58/297, we commend the effort invested in such a comprehensive and voluminous report, but we can not agree with every single line in this document.

The Tribunal's exit strategy has rightly recognized the importance of bringing the war crimes trials to a local level. In that regard, we welcome the efforts aimed at assisting national jurisdictions in improving their capacity to prosecute cases delegated to them by the ICTY, further endorsed in Security Council resolution 1503 (2003). In Croatia, a number of war crimes are being investigated and prosecutions are being launched. Furthermore, the Government has introduced legislation that, while facilitating future

cooperation with the ICC, also strengthens the capability of the domestic legal system for prosecuting war crimes. Croatia is ready to cooperate closely with the ICTY in conducting such trials. Under the existing legislation, ICTY representatives are entitled to follow the proceedings and have access to court files, while evidentiary material obtained by the ICTY can be used directly in domestic trials.

A readiness for a broader and more transparent international monitoring of war crimes trials has been indicated. We are pleased that the report notes this positive trend in the cooperation between the Office of the Prosecutor and the Office of the State Attorney of Croatia in regard to prosecutions before national courts. We feel confident in taking up this demanding task.

Mr. Šahović (Serbia and Montenegro): Allow me to extend the appreciation of my delegation to the President of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), Judge Theodor Meron, for the comprehensive report on the Tribunal's work in the past year and his introductory analysis, which we have just heard. We have studied the report and its conclusions with great attention.

I would also like to express our pleasure with President Meron's recent visit to Serbia and Montenegro and the fruitful talks my Government had with him. We highly appreciate his recognition of the improved cooperation of our country with the ICTY. As our highest officials reiterated during this visit, complying with its international obligation to cooperate with the Tribunal is Serbia and Montenegro's priority.

My Government emphasizes its support for the internal reforms undertaken by the ICTY, designed to improve the efficiency of the Trial Chamber's proceedings. We take note of the increased number of simultaneous trials and the enhanced capacity of the Tribunal to expeditiously process cases. My Government particularly welcomes the report's assessment that these reforms are part of efforts to bring the ICTY's work to an orderly close, in accordance with the completion strategy approved by the Security Council. We welcome the establishment of a special War Crimes Chamber for prosecutions in the State Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina as an encouraging step in that direction.

The referral of lower-level cases to competent national courts constitutes an important part of the completion strategy. My Government believes it is time for the Tribunal to start considering the possibility of referral of certain cases to other national jurisdictions in the States of the former Yugoslavia. In that context, we are looking forward to cooperation between the ICTY, in particular the Prosecutor's Office, and the appropriate judicial bodies in Serbia and Montenegro.

Both by its willingness to cooperate with the ICTY and to try war crimes cases before its own courts, Serbia and Montenegro is seeking to contribute to the attainment of the completion strategy goals. Before our national courts, there are currently seven war crimes trials.

In addition, we are working to develop the capacities of local judiciary to deal with complex proceedings of this nature. We recognize the necessity of international guidance and assistance in this important field, which is welcome. Recent legislation has enabled the establishment of a special prosecutor's office for war crimes. In accordance with the recommendations of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, this office will function as an independent body, subordinate only to the Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. The recently adopted law on the organization and competencies of the State authorities in proceedings against the perpetrators of war crimes also provides for the establishment of a special court chamber and a special unit within the Serbian Ministry of the Interior to deal with war crimes cases. I am pleased to say that during his visit to Belgrade, Judge Meron welcomed the establishment of these judicial bodies.

Before turning to specific issues of cooperation between my Government and the ICTY, I would like briefly to mention one aspect of the Tribunal's work which is not often highlighted, but which deserves attention. The outreach programme, designed to familiarize the broad public in the countries of the former Yugoslavia with the activities of the Tribunal, especially with respect to the Trial Chambers, should, in our view, continue. For the programme to be effective, it should be adapted to various segments of the local public, such as the political and legal communities and the population at large. In this way, the programme can also assist Government authorities in their efforts towards further cooperation with the Tribunal.

As for cooperation between my country and the ICTY, I would like briefly to highlight the following facts. First, we have amended the law on cooperation with the Tribunal, in accordance with the ICTY

statutes, deleting provisions that originally placed certain restrictions on the surrender of persons indicted by the Tribunal. Therefore, all internal legal obstacles to full cooperation have been removed.

Secondly, as of 8 August 2002, Serbia and Montenegro had received 17 arrest warrants from the ICTY. From that date to the present, five of the accused on the list voluntarily surrendered and were transferred to the Tribunal, including the former President of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic. Another three indictees were arrested by the authorities of Serbia and Montenegro and transferred to the ICTY, including the former head of the State Security Agency Jovica Stanisic and the last of the so-called Bukovar-three, Veselin Sljivancanin. In addition, proceedings are currently underway for the transfer of another person indicted for war crimes in Dubrovnik.

Thirdly, as far as access to documentation is concerned, Serbia and Montenegro has handed over to the ICTY volumes of minutes, verbatim records and other classified documents from various State institutions and agencies, including the counter-intelligence service of the Yugoslav army. Altogether, we have handed over to the Tribunal more than 7,000 classified documents since the beginning of 2001.

Fourthly, with regard to access to witnesses, I would like to point out that no less than 130 individuals, including three former heads of State, were released of their obligation not to disclose State, military or official secrets, in order to testify before the ICTY. This process continues.

We hope that the aforementioned will help place in the proper context the issue of my country's cooperation with the Tribunal.

Finally, we support the Prosecutor's commitment to complete the investigations and indictments by the end of 2004. In this context, Serbia and Montenegro welcomes the first indictment against members of the Kosovo Liberation Army for crimes committed in Kosovo and Metohija. We are awaiting with great interest the results of other allegedly numerous investigations of crimes committed against members of minority communities in this province.

For our part, we are firmly of the view that the individual responsibility of all perpetrators of all crimes committed during the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia should be established in proceedings both before the ICTY and the national court. My Government is aware that cooperation with the ICTY is its obligation and that more still needs to be done in that respect. The cooperation with the Tribunal is a process my Government will continue, and in doing so, it will make all efforts to achieve further improvements.

Mr. George (Nigeria): May I take this opportunity once again to congratulate you on your well-deserved election and to reaffirm the support and cooperation of the Nigerian delegation in your determination to steer the deliberations of the fifty-eighth session towards its successful conclusion.

I would also like to congratulate Judge Eric Møse on his recent appointment as President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and wish him every success in his new duties.

The Nigerian delegation appreciates the fact that the International Tribunals for both Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia are engaged in a very crucial assignment which is of great importance for humanity. We also believe that the existence of these Tribunals testifies to the collective determination of Member States of the United Nations to stem the propagation of genocide and crimes against humanity. Indeed, the landmark actions by the United Nations to establish these Tribunals has gone a long way in restoring human dignity and respect for fundamental human rights, as well as the rule of law.

It is pertinent to mention also that these Tribunals have helped enforce, through national reconciliation, stability and peace in the countries concerned through the administration of justice. Furthermore, the ad hoc Tribunals have made notable contributions to the development of international criminal justice. Most of all, the ICTR, through its work, has made and continues to make substantial contributions to the replacement of a culture of impunity with values of accountability. Indeed, the decisions of the ICTR, for example, are already creating a substantial body of case law which is already being used by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), and by State courts worldwide.

There is no doubt that the ensuing developments in international criminal justice will provide a solid foundation for the International Criminal Court (ICC), which has now become a functional judicial institution. In point of fact, the pioneering work of the Registrar of the ICTR in the area of restitutive justice has found a

pride of place in the provisions of the Rome Statute of the ICC. It is against this backdrop that the Nigerian delegation has expressed keen interest in evaluating the current reports of the ICTR and the ICTY.

It is heartening to note that in spite of daunting challenges, such as inadequate infrastructure, complexity of cases, the need for voluminous disclosures and translation of documents, transport of witnesses from all parts of the world and unavailability of witnesses, to mention but a few, the ICTR was able to handle a total of nine trials during its second mandate, involving 14 accused, which is twice the number of accused who have been tried under the first mandate, between 1995 and 1999. It is significant, therefore, to note that the Tribunal will have rendered 15 judgments involving 21 accused persons by the end of this year.

The Nigerian delegation commends the Tribunal for delivering two appeal judgments on the merits, six interlocutory appeal decisions and 19 other decisions and orders during the period under review.

The Nigerian delegation, however, notes its concern with the relatively slow pace of trials of the ICTR, as compared to tribunals conducted at the national level. Although this problem has been particularly ascribed to various factors, some of which have already been highlighted, there is need to look into an important aspect of the recent reform of the ICTR concerning the creation of a pool of 18 ad litem judges, which is aimed at increasing the Tribunal's judicial capacity.

The proposal for the reform appears to have been defeated as the relevant Security Council resolution for the ICTR only allows the use of four ad litem judges at one time. There is no doubt that the reform of the ICTR is primarily aimed at expediting the trials of the accused persons and at avoiding the negation of the axiom that justice delayed is justice denied. It is imperative that this low number of ad litem judges to be used at any one time should be reconsidered. The ICTR's report under consideration clearly affirms that the provision of four ad litem judges at any one time makes the division into sections difficult. This is all the more reason why we believe that reconsideration is necessary. In order to ensure the early completion of the ICTR mandate, the Nigerian delegation recommends that the ICTR ad litem judges should be increased to the same level as that of the ICTY, which was given the opportunity to use nine ad litem judges at any one time.

The ICTR needs the full support of the United Nations to carry on with the incredible work that it is doing. The Rwanda Tribunal's present witness programme needs to be further strengthened to ensure adequate protective measures so that witness, whether for the prosecution or the defence, can testify incognito and be protected from the risk of reprisals.

We commend the Registrar's untiring efforts and initiatives to promote better knowledge and awareness at various strata of civil society, particularly about the work of the ICTR, especially in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region. The current effort by the Registrar to seek greater support for the reconciliation process in Rwanda and the establishment of a special fund for the victims of genocide in Rwanda is also a step in the right direction.

The Nigerian delegation notes with satisfaction the assumption of office by the newly-appointed prosecutor for the ICTR, Mr. Hassan Bubacar Jallow from The Gambia, who took up his new mandate at the headquarters of the Tribunal in Arusha, Tanzania, on 3 October 2003. We believe that the appointment of a new Prosecutor will mitigate some of the existing institutional problems of the ICTR and enhance the Tribunal's standards of professionalism and impartiality. I also believe that the Prosecutor will bring his professional skills and wealth of experience to bear on his duties and provide the required leadership and guidance to move the Tribunal forward by developing a clear and comprehensive strategy towards the attainment of the ICTR's mandate.

As regards the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), my delegation commends the efforts that have been made so far to carry out both internal and external reforms, primarily designed to improve the Tribunal's efficiency of proceedings, including the expansion of the duties of ad litem judges. In that regard, my delegation specifically commends the Tribunal for the external component of its completion strategy by reaching an agreement with the Office of the United Nations High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina concerning the establishment of a special chamber for war crimes prosecutions in the State Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We believe that this is a constructive initiative that will enable the Tribunal to begin transferring some cases of mid- and lower-level accused to the special chamber for war crimes prosecutors in the State Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina during 2004 or early 2005.

In conclusion, the Tribunals need the sustained support of the international community for the achievement of their objectives. The existence of these Tribunals is undoubtedly a reflection of the commitment of the international community to the principles of the rule of law, a sine qua non for building a just society. Nigeria reiterates its continued support for the work of the ICTR and ICTY as part of the collective will to ensure that the Tribunals are able to discharge their responsibilities credibly.

Mr. Gahima (Rwanda): Allow me to thank you, Sir, for the opportunity accorded to my delegation to participate in this important debate.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) for his report and to assure him and his collaborators of my Government's continued support for their work.

Allow me also to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General and the Security Council for the recent decision to appoint a separate Prosecutor for the ICTR, a change in the structure of the Tribunal that my Government had long advocated. We believe that this change will go a long way towards addressing some of the concerns that my Government has raised about the work of the Tribunal in the past.

The Government of Rwanda is committed to seeking justice for the victims of the 1994 genocide, particularly as far as the senior Government, military and civil society leaders who planned and oversaw the Rwanda genocide are concerned. Promoting the rule of law, in general, and accountability, in particular, for the genocide and other violations of international humanitarian law that occurred in Rwanda between 1990 and 1994, has been one of the pillars of the programme of the transitional Government of national unity. Consequently, we attach very great importance indeed to the work of the ICTR.

To assist the ICTR in achieving its mandate, the Government of Rwanda has put in place mechanisms to facilitate its work. We have provided assistance and hospitality to ICTR personnel in Rwanda for the last nine years. All judicial, law enforcement, central Government and local government organs in Rwanda have standing instructions to assist ICTR personnel in their work in our country.

We provide access to vital witnesses, undertake investigations for the Office of the Prosecutor whenever we are requested to do so, make available evidence in our possession relating to cases in which the ICTR is interested to its trial attorneys and investigators, facilitate the travel of witnesses to testify before the ICTR and continue to actively assist and cooperate with the Tribunal in locating fugitive genocide suspects, with a view to their apprehension. We regret, however, that the invaluable assistance which Government institutions and private citizens of Rwanda have provided and continued to provide to the ICTR, at considerable sacrifice and expense, often goes unacknowledged and unappreciated.

As the ICTR focuses on its completion strategy, it should be recognized that the people of Rwanda are stakeholders in the Tribunal's work, with a legitimate right to express views on aspects of the Tribunal's performance that could be improved. Not only are we part of the international community, we are also the victims for whom the Tribunal was established to bring justice.

The following are some of the areas in respect of which the Tribunal's performance has had shortcomings, and which require attention. The Tribunal, to date, is remote and alienated from Rwandan society and has failed to have any significant impact on it, as was envisaged by Security Council resolution 955 (1994), which established the Tribunal. The Tribunal's management organs have often worked as unrelated institutions, lacking cohesion instead of being complementary organs of the same institution working in close collaboration.

Furthermore, the Office of the Prosecutor has over the years failed to develop a realistic and comprehensive prosecution strategy. The Tribunal has failed to develop a credible and effective witness protection programme and has neglected to address other pertinent concerns and needs of victims and witnesses. The Tribunal has hired perpetrators of genocide and close relatives and friends of suspects as defence investigators and legal assistants, who then in turn threaten genocide survivors who are prosecution witnesses. There are fee-splitting arrangements between genocide suspects in detention and defence lawyers and investigators, with the result being that financial contributions made by the international community to bring to justice the perpetrators of genocide are used instead to enrich the criminals and their families and friends, and to fuel conflict in our region.

Also, the Office of the Prosecutor has failed to indict and apprehend large numbers of prominent genocide suspects, who are still at large in many countries, and it has also failed to develop a realistic and credible completion strategy.

By and large, the perception in Rwanda is that, in view of the vast resources at its disposal, the ICTR has been slow, inefficient and ineffective.

We would like to recognize that there has been some progress in addressing some of the concerns which the Government and the people of Rwanda have had with regard to the performance of the ICTR. I would in this regard like to cite the following examples: the appointment of a separate prosecutor for the ICTR; the appointment of the ad litem judges; and the initiatives taken by the new President of the Tribunal to expedite the pace of the trials and to promote the effective functioning of the Tribunal, as Judge Møse indicated this morning.

Rwanda, much like the rest of the international community, hopes and believes that the new leadership of the Tribunal offers a window of opportunity for addressing the problems that have plagued the Tribunal in the past, and sets the institution on a course that will enable it to leave a legacy of which we can all be justly proud in the years to come.

My Government reiterates its sincere determination to continue to render its full support to the ICTR to enable it to fulfil its mandate. We also call upon all relevant organs of the United Nations, including the General Assembly, to continue to explore ways of making the ICTR more efficient and effective, and we take this opportunity to make the following recommendations for consideration by the Assembly.

With regard to the completion strategy, we recommend that there should be greater consultation between all stakeholders concerned than has hitherto been possible on the proposed strategy. We recommend that the completion strategy urgently address the problem of the large numbers of genocide suspects whom the Office of the Prosecutor has not indicted and who are still at large in many countries across the world. We recommend also that the completion strategy address the financial implications of the transfer of more than 30 cases to Rwanda and make provisions as to how the financial resources required to assist Rwanda to deal with those cases will be raised.

On the problem of the remoteness and alienation of the Tribunal from Rwandan society, we recommend that the Tribunal undertake a credible and substantial outreach programme to bridge the gap between it and Rwandan society. We are of the view that the ICTR could have useful lessons to learn from the experience of the Sierra Leone Tribunal in this regard. We would also once again recommend that hearings of at least some of the cases being heard by the Tribunal be conducted in Rwanda.

As regards the Tribunal's relationship with survivors, we urge the ICTR to resolve its outstanding misunderstandings with the survivors of the genocide through dialogue with their chosen representatives.

As regards the hiring of persons suspected of having participated in genocide, we recommend that the Government of Rwanda and the ICTR agree on mechanisms for vetting prospective employees in order to ensure that persons responsible for genocide are not employed by the Tribunal. We recommend also the appointment of an independent commission to investigate and make an urgent report on the presence of persons among the personnel of the ICTR suspected of having committed genocide, and on proposed measures to be taken to ensure that the perpetrators of the genocide and their relatives and friends do not continue to be unjustly enriched by money which the international community pays to ensure that they are instead brought to justice.

As regards the treatment and protection of witnesses, we call upon the ICTR to provide adequate counselling and preparation to prosecution witnesses prior to their appearance before the ICTR. We call also for the establishment of an effective witness programme that is agreed between the ICTR and the Government.

Regarding mismanagement of the Tribunal in general, we urge greater collaboration between various organs of the ICTR, so that they act as complementary organs of one institution instead of perceiving themselves as separate, autonomous and competing organs. We also call upon the organs concerned to end recruitment practices based on factors other than merit, which have in the past had an adverse effect on the competence of personnel.

Finally, regarding the relationship between the ICTR and the Government of Rwanda, we recommend that, as far as addressing shortcomings in the investigation and prosecution of cases being handled by the ICTR, there ought to be closer collaboration between ICTR

personnel with Rwandan prosecution and investigation authorities to ensure better preparation of cases.

We recommend that greater use be made of Rwandan professionals within the ICTR during the remaining years of its mandate, because they are more familiar with the facts and circumstances of the genocide, and their experience would be beneficial as the domestic courts of Rwanda begin to assume responsibility for the cases which will be transferred from the ICTR to our domestic courts.

Finally, we urge the implementation of previous recommendations and agreements to institutionalize a system of liaison officers between the ICTR and the Government to facilitate collaboration and cooperation.

In conclusion, I would like to express my Government's appreciation to the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretary-General for their continuing interest in and support to the ICTR.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda items 53 and 54?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 60 and 10 (*continued*)

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Report of the Secretary-General (A/58/323)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/58/1)

The President: I should like to inform members that, in a letter dated 8 October 2003 addressed to the President of the General Assembly, the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Western European and Other States for the month of October, requests that the General Assembly hear in plenary meeting a statement by the Observer of the Holy See in the debate on agenda item 60, "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit", and agenda item 10, "Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization".

May I take it that there is no objection to the proposal to hear a statement by the Observer of the Holy See in the debate on agenda items 10 and 60?

It was so decided.

Mr. Limon (Suriname): I would like first of all to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit and on the work of the Organization. We welcome the initiative by the Secretary-General to establish a high-level panel of eminent personalities to examine major global challenges, such as peace and security, as well as United Nations reform.

The maintenance of international peace and security is one of the pillars upon which the United Nations was established. Recent developments have brought to our attention both old and new threats to international security. In addition to traditional threats to security, in response to which borders and people are secured from external attack, we are now faced with other threats to international security that affect contemporary international relations. These include transnational organized crime, the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, environmental pollution and economic crises, all of which could eventually lead to social and political instability. In order to achieve a common security agenda, it is essential that the international community first reach agreement on the main threats to international peace and security, both old and new, and on ways to collectively deal with those threats.

One of the long-pursued objectives of the United Nations is the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction from the world. There is growing concern among the members of the international community and within the United Nations that non-State actors could acquire and utilize such weapons. The multilateral instruments and means that currently exist to deal with threats of weapons of mass destruction focus only on threats posed by States, not on those posed by non-State actors, and have no specific penalties for non-compliance. My Government agrees with the Secretary-General that these are crucial weaknesses that should be addressed.

Acts of terrorism are a grave danger to international peace and security and represent a serious violation of fundamental human rights. The growing interdependence in the world has the disadvantage in that it could facilitate terrorist activities all over the globe. Terrorism should therefore be dealt with by collective means. The fight against terrorism, to which Suriname is fully committed, must at all times respect

international law, human rights and the principles of tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

The transport of nuclear waste through the Caribbean Sea is an issue of grave concern to the Caribbean region — especially in the light of the increase in terrorist activities throughout the world — given the potential danger that it poses.

One of the basic human rights of each human being is the right to development, which needs to be human-centred and sustainable. Global poverty is still one of the most difficult challenges facing the international community. Achieving the Millennium Goals by 2015 will, indeed, require greater national and international efforts. The implementation of the Goals should be further promoted, and both developing and industrialized nations should abide by their commitments in this respect.

It has been determined that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is the deadliest in human history and that it is having a devastating social and economic impact. The fact that the Caribbean region has the second highest percentage of HIV-infected people is alarming. My Government is therefore committed to stopping and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS, as well as of malaria and other diseases. In this regard, a national strategic plan on HIV/AIDS for the period 2004-2008 is being developed.

Industrialized countries must live up to their commitments regarding official development assistance and work towards a regime of fair trade with developing countries. The multilateral trading system needs to be improved. Developing countries need to be included to a greater extent in the decision-making process of the main international organizations.

Follow-up to the outcome of the major United Nations conferences, especially those on sustainable development and financing for development, is necessary. In our overall efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals, we must tackle crucial environmental challenges such as climate change and biodiversity protection, and we should all live up to our commitment regarding the responsible and equitable management of the Earth's resources, as set out in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

Education for all, gender equality and bridging the digital divide are issues that also require attention if sufficient development is to be achieved. The international community should make a serious effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and thus create better living conditions for all of the world's people.

We are currently going through a trying time in international relations. One of the major challenges in this respect is the threat to multilateralism. This calls for the international community urgently to acknowledge its responsibility for taking a collective approach towards resolving global problems and reviewing the functioning and structure of key multilateral institutions like the United Nations.

Suriname supports the efforts to strengthen the United Nations through reform. The reform of the Security Council should ensure that that body becomes a more democratic and representative organ and thus reflects contemporary geopolitical realities. The most challenging task will be to find the right solution for Security Council reform — a solution that enables it to effectively deal with matters of international peace and security in the context of the current world order.

We also supports reform proposals with regard to strengthening the General Assembly, such as streamlining its agenda, improving its decision-making process, strengthening the role of soft-law instruments, such as resolutions and declarations, and enhancing the Council's relations with the rest of the United Nations system.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my Government's commitment to work with the rest of the international community towards a more peaceful, humane, equitable and just world.

Mr. Alcalay (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like first of all to express appreciation to you, Mr. President, for having designed the programme of work related to items allocated for discussion in plenary meetings in such a way as to ensure a comprehensive overview of the issues with which we are concerned. This is particularly true as we address these two items that we now have before us, because of the close interrelationship of the two reports of the Secretary-General, as shown in the complementarity of the accounts of the advances made in implementing the Millennium Goals.

A significant number of delegations in the general debate endorsed the proposal to strengthen this world political forum. The General Assembly is the

only forum that the international community has to review and consider issues, topics and questions relating to peace and international security.

This convergence of views should be the beginning of something momentous. We are seeing the international community urging the preservation of a collective approach to the issues and challenges facing the United Nations, by means of multilateralism. All of this requires that this Organization, also affected by the process of globalization, adapt to changes and keep in step with new international demands.

The United Nations should be the centre for decision-making to tackle the challenges and threats that face humankind. The buttressing of the system of collective security and a multilateral approach to issues of concern and interest to the international community must be the foundation for our renovation of this Organization.

The Secretary-General, in his annual report, sets forth very clearly the challenges lying ahead of the United Nations and has given us an account of what the Organization is doing in the areas of peace and security, social and economic development, humanitarian assistance, international law and human rights, and the protection and preservation of the environment, among other priority issues.

The points he makes make it clear once again that there is a need to conserve a multifaceted approach which will make it possible for each and every Member State to make its contribution, to share its experience, or present a viewpoint in order to make the decision-making process on these important issues a participatory one.

In our view, our decisions should be grounded in the ideals of social justice, freedom, peace, economic progress, democracy and independence, and should be designed to build a balanced international climate in which justice will prevail in an environment of solidarity that will promote the security and stability that are vital for human progress.

Despite the difficulties involved in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the scant progress reflected in the report of the Secretary-General, those Goals are still, without question, the relevant agenda of this Organization. The Millennium Development Goals encompass a broad range of challenges and problems that are not conventional in nature, and that affect international peace and security. In our view, the progress that will be made in achieving these Goals will, to a large extent, depend on the progress achieved in reducing poverty and deprivation and eliminating social exclusion.

Prevention of armed conflict is an area in which the Organization has significant potential in terms of its future work. General Assembly resolution 57/337 was an excellent contribution by Member States in terms of addressing this task. The Assembly should continue to work on and develop that resolution because of its importance and predictable effects, and that issue should hold a high place in our follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals.

Without disregarding the need to continue to intensify action to combat the emergence of new threats to international peace and security, such as international terrorism and international organized crime, it is vital for the Organization to allocate the necessary resources to promote and respond to the great needs of development and of poverty eradication through the development of peoples.

The progress made towards these Goals will be a key factor in the creation of more just societies and more robust and stable democracies, while at the same time we can also eliminate the dangers, referred to earlier, of threats to international peace and security. For this reason it is essential to bolster the support and assistance mechanisms for developing countries and offer them fresh and innovative tools that will make it possible for them to achieve the goal of economic and social well-being for their peoples.

In light of this, we are convinced that the establishment of an international humanitarian fund, as proposed by our country as a tool which will help combat the social emergency facing humankind, continues to be a valid proposal and we will continue putting it forward in future negotiations.

Venezuela attaches great importance to achieving the Millennium Declaration Goals. In this regard, we are particularly eager to see specific formulas, methods and plans adopted that will allow for follow-up and evaluation of the Goals, because the progress made in combating poverty and social inequities will be essential in achieving our country's development goals. This process needs to be viewed as a multidimensional exercise including targets in the areas of health, education, productivity, care for the environment, respect for human rights and the promotion of cultural

values and cultural diversity, as fundamental elements of the social agenda. This is the challenge that my Government has undertaken in pursuing these Goals. Venezuela believes there is a need to draw up specific plans of action that will boost our ability to achieve the goals of our social agenda.

The social and economic agenda should be given the same degree of priority as the political one, so that the problems involved can be looked at as a set, and from the standpoint of solidarity, with emphasis placed on international cooperation to work to create a more secure and fairer world, one to which we all aspire and which would be free of many of the conditions in which terrorism and armed conflict can germinate, growing into wars and armed conflict whose scope can become international.

The United Nations needs to step up its efforts to aid and assist developing countries, while at the same time accommodating the specific needs of middle income countries, as well as, in particular, the needs of the least developed countries, which deserve primary attention. To this end, we need to establish mechanisms and special modalities which make it possible for them to receive the necessary resources and cooperation.

A key step towards achieving these objectives will be the firm commitment on the part of all of us to shift towards a more human development model, grounded in new ethical values governed by social justice. In this regard, we should revise the concept of international security, a concept which would need to be defined from the perspective of the human individual. This has been very much the concern of the United Nations in developing universal norms and standards to protect the rights and fundamental freedoms of the individual. But when we consider and analyse the effective enjoyment of these rights on the worldwide level, we see that the results are still minimal. The task appears gigantic when you look at the figures we receive daily and see how those excluded from the enjoyment of these rights continue to suffer the greatest hardship.

At the present time, Venezuela is hosting a high-level conference on poverty, equality and social inclusion, in conjunction with the Organization of American States, to consider ways and means of eradicating poverty, in particular critical poverty, as a pre-condition to build and enhance democracy.

As the Assembly can appreciate, the topic of combating poverty is an issue of high priority for Latin America and the Caribbean, and we are certain that the conclusions that will be reached in the next few days will also make it possible for us to contribute to the efforts of the United Nations towards that end.

From that standpoint, it is very important to begin the process of the implementation of the Monterrey and Johannesburg declarations, together with that of the outcomes of the other major United Nations conferences that have been held recently in the economic and social fields. We must establish the appropriate guidelines so as to achieve all the imperatives of the Millennium Development Goals.

The inclusion in the High-level Dialogue of financial institutions such as those of Bretton Woods and the increasing partnership among non-governmental organizations and the private sector will undoubtedly help us achieve those Goals.

At the international level, there is a very clear sense that we should take advantage of this opportunity to update our Organization, adapting it to the challenges that it faces and to the scale of the job that it needs to do. We must pool our efforts in order to chart the new course that the Organization, after a half-century of existence, must embark upon — efforts which must be further enhanced and fine-tuned.

We need to do our utmost to focus our endeavours and our attention on areas that have the greatest impact on international life, without losing sight of the need to ensure that this serves to benefit each and every individual and all peoples of the world.

In conclusion, we would like to express our confidence in the Secretary-General's proposal to set up a panel of eminent persons to report on the need for restructuring the principal organs of the United Nations. The recommendations that they will be making in this regard will undoubtedly be extremely useful.

I wish to take this opportunity to state my delegation's readiness to cooperate at all times with such panel and in connection with the other proposals that have been made, so as to ensure that we make an effective contribution to make the United Nations a renewed and forward-looking Organization.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to say, Sir, how deeply my delegation appreciates the skill, talent and devotion that you have been

demonstrating in managing and guiding our Assembly. I should like also to congratulate the Secretary-General on the high quality of his reports on the work of the Organization and on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, as well as on the importance and relevance of his recommendations and conclusions.

Before I turn to the consideration of some points to which my country attaches major importance, I should like to say that we endorse the statement made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

An assessment of the work done by the United Nations over the past 12 months shows that problems related to peace and security, development, human rights, democracy and good governance remain priority concerns for the international community. The grim succession of terrorist attacks we have witnessed recently, culminating in the disastrous attack of 19 August last against the United Nations, brought to light the complexity of the challenges facing humankind at the national, regional and international levels. By attacking, with such unprecedented violence, United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, the perpetrators of international terrorism sought to attack the principles, universal values and purposes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and to call into question the credibility and legitimacy of its mission — working for peace, stability and development.

In that context, the report of the Secretary-General rightly describes that tragedy as a direct challenge to the vision of global solidarity and collective security rooted in the Charter of the United Nations and articulated in the Millennium Declaration.

The rapid globalization of local or regional crises is a challenge to the political will and the sense of responsibility of the United Nations and of its principal organs. Our Organization needs to heighten its resolve to continue its fight against international terrorism and to find a peaceful and lasting political settlement to the many conflicts that beset the world, particularly in the Middle East and in Africa.

The United Nations must continue to help the Iraqi people to rebuild their country and to support ongoing efforts for the restoration of their full sovereignty. In the Middle East, initiatives must be taken to relaunch the peace process. All parties must be urged to exercise maximum restraint and to abide by agreements that have been signed, as well as the relevant provisions of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, in order to provide a negotiated solution to the crisis.

My delegation welcomes the intensive efforts of the United Nations in the area of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building in Africa and in the rest of the world. The examples of Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, quite recently, of Liberia show how very successful our Organization can be in deploying, sometimes in emergency conditions, of increasingly complex peace operations involving multiple partners in the field.

The challenges to peace and security have a global dimension. They require collective responses based on the international legitimacy of the United Nations. It is time for the Assembly to take a close look at the architecture of international institutions and to seek to adapt their structure and functions to current needs.

In this respect, we support the Secretary-General's unrelenting efforts to revitalize and reform the United Nations. Our Assembly should, inter alia, support the activities of the high-level panel that he has mandated to consider ways to strengthen the United Nations through a reform of its institutions. My country has a priority interest in this reform and will contribute to its consideration by Member States.

My country is convinced that, at this critical stage in world affairs, the principal organs of the United Nations — the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council — must be strengthened, so that they can better live up to the expectations of the developing world and to ensure a more equitable allocation of the benefits of globalization.

For Africa, translating the Millennium Development Goals into reality is the best hope for putting an end to poverty and to nip in the bud the many causes of conflict and instability. The commitments undertaken in the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) by the Africans themselves, with the support of their development partners, are of crucial importance. NEPAD is a unique opportunity for Africa, and we are pleased to see our Organization participating fully in this dynamic movement. We also need to consider the progress made in establishing the new world partnership on which NEPAD must base its development, for unless the international community mobilizes right now to give the necessary resources to

Africa, the continent runs the serious risk of not attaining the Millennium Development Goals.

My delegation notes with regret that negotiations on the key elements of the Doha Development Round were not fruitful at the recent Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, held in Cancún. We urge our partners to respond positively to the proposals of the developing countries concerning areas of crucial importance for peace, stability and progress throughout the world.

In conclusion, we encourage the United Nations to continue to work for a more equitable world order, one conducive to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Kilo-Abi (Democratic Republic of Congo) *(spoke in French)*: The delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, through the authoritative voice of His Excellency, the President of the Republic, Major General Joseph Kabila, has already had an opportunity to congratulate you on the devotion, skill and competence with which you and the members of your Bureau have been conducting the Assembly's work. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to say how much we appreciate the two reports of the Secretary-General on the work of the United Nations and on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

We would like to say that while highlighting the challenges and difficulties facing the United Nations in helping to attain the needs of world solidarity and collective security, the Secretary-General indicates the following in his reports: first, the number of Member States of the United Nations has increased from 51, when it was first created, to 191 today. It is possible that, thanks to the work done by the Special Committee on decolonization, this number may increase.

Secondly, the objectives of peace and security outlined in the Millennium Declaration have been assailed through the exacerbation of heinous acts such as terrorism, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, anti-personnel mines, the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction, the upsurge in transnational criminal networks and the looting of natural resources in the name of the vague notion of defending internal security interests. Thirdly, many people throughout the world are overwhelmed by famine, extreme poverty, total destitution, ignorance, disease and unprecedented pandemics. Fourthly, social and economic progress have been halted in the wake of several wars.

In order to deal with all of these challenges and to chart the way towards strengthening and revitalizing international peace and security and, therefore, development, the Democratic Republic of the Congo believes that everything should be based on coordinated action, bearing in mind, first, the overriding need to strengthen and supplement existing regimes dealing with weapons of mass destruction, small arms and light weapons, as well as anti-personnel mines. Secondly, we must also bear in mind the imposition of financial sanctions and arms embargoes to produce a kind of shock therapy on the behaviour of parties and to ensure compliance with the decisions of Member States. Thirdly, the adoption of effective measures to ruthlessly combat war economies as well as the trafficking in precious stones and raw materials that very often fuel conflicts in the countries that produce these resources. At this stage, everything should be done to strengthen the diamond certification system within the Kimberley Process. Fourthly, a genuine political and economic commitment by Member States is necessary in order to have a real impact on all actors involved in armed conflicts.

My delegation, at this point, would like to remind the Assembly of the request made by His Excellency, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on 24 September, to set up a United Nations fund to provide compensation for the untold damage suffered by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to establish, with the assistance of the United Nations, an international criminal tribunal for the Democratic Republic of the Congo to deal with crimes of genocide; crimes against humanity, including rape used as a weapon of war; and mass violations of human rights.

Fifthly, in the area of development, there is a need to take into account globalization as a positive force for all humankind that should be based on a world partnership for an increasingly diversified, dynamic kind of development.

The reform of the United Nations is essential in order to meet crucial needs, including, first, to make our collective security system credible; secondly to buttress the principle of the sovereign equality of States; thirdly to adapt to current conditions the membership of some bodies that would become obsolete because they date back to 1945, and fourthly,

the need to take into account the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century.

While we endorse the contents of the statement made by the representative of the Kingdom of Morocco, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo favours the strengthening as well as the democratization of multilateral institutions, particularly through strengthening the rule of law.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): Let me begin by congratulating you on your well-deserved election to preside over the fifty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly. I admire your leadership and your vast experience in the diplomatic field and have full confidence that we will have a successful session under your leadership.

The Millennium Declaration embodies most, if not all, of the principles and purposes of the United Nations, spelt out in more concrete terms. Some have even said the Declaration is a second charter of the world body. For now, implementation of the Declaration is the primary task of the United Nations. Hence, Nepal welcomes the scheme to consider together the reports on the work of the Organization and on the follow-up to the Millennium Summit.

Both reports indicate that the past 12 months saw many advances and setbacks for the United Nations and for the world at large. The most appalling outrage during this period was the two terrorist attacks on the United Nations compound in Baghdad, which killed Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello and others. Our hearts go out to the bereaved families.

Indeed, maintaining peace and security remains a major concern for the world and a daunting challenge for the United Nations. Nepal appreciates what the United Nations has been doing to prevent and resolve conflicts, to stamp out terrorism and to promote disarmament and a culture of peace around the world, with remarkable success in some cases and not in others.

Sierra Leone and East Timor are two recent examples of places where the United Nations has achieved its goals. However, the United Nations has failed to act with regard to Iraq. It has not been able to stop the bloodshed, and for half a century it has not been able to resolve the festering Middle East crisis. Afghanistan, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and a number of other conflict-ridden places remain serious challenges for the world body.

Despite the United Nations initiative for concerted global action against terrorism, that menace remains a major threat to world peace. Indeed, we must bring terror to its knees. At the same time, we must address the root causes and constituents of terror, such as poverty, discrimination and lack of awareness and of opportunity. We must deny access of non-State actors to small arms and light weapons by revamping the relevant global agreements.

His Majesty's Government highly appreciates the Secretary-General's concern about the Maoist insurgency that is terrorizing Nepal and his kind offer of his good offices. We shall certainly avail ourselves of his generosity when we believe his good offices would be most fruitful. We also applaud all those friends who have been supporting us in dealing with the Maoist problem and in carrying out quick-yielding developmental activities in the affected areas.

It is disappointing that the United Nations Conference on Disarmament has been caught in the prison of schismatic inertia and has not been able even to produce a programme of work for the past several years, let alone a strategy to rid the world of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame. Verification measures for a chemical and nuclear weapons ban remain weak. We must take urgent steps to revive disarmament as a priority agenda item for the United Nations.

It is troubling that nearly 800 million people are hungry and more than one fifth of the world's people live on less than a dollar a day, with nearly two thirds of them in Asia. The depth of poverty is appalling in sub-Saharan Africa. The United Nations deserves credit for bringing the world community together to agree on the Millennium Development Goals, the Monterrey Consensus, the Johannesburg Programme of Implementation and other compacts to deal with the challenge of development. Indeed, over the past couple of years, poverty and hunger have marginally receded. The child mortality rate has declined and school enrolments have improved, both slightly. More resources are now available to fight HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, and since last year an upward trend has been witnessed in development assistance.

However, implementation of those agreements remains unconscionably slow, and progress remains starkly inadequate. To meet the Millennium

Development Goals, developing nations will need an additional $50 billion in assistance annually, but the additional pledges are scarcely one third of that figure. And the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative is moving at a snail's pace, while highly indebted countries continue to reel with the excruciating pain of unsustainable debt burdens. We must not allow the global economic slowdown to weaken our resolve or to hamper our progress.

The Doha Development Round — a linchpin of the efforts to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals — collapsed in Cancún, and colossal farm subsidies and other tariff and non-tariff barriers of rich nations persist as obstacles to free trade and to growth in poor countries. The failed Cancún trade talks should be salvaged by quickly resuming negotiations so that the promise of Doha becomes a reality and does not remain a mere mirage.

The United Nations has always stressed that disadvantaged countries need special attention and adequate resources to mitigate their difficulties. Its funds and programmes have done their best in that regard. For example, the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries has already been mainstreamed into the United Nations system. But the overall result continues to be a cause of concern. Development assistance to the least developed countries is woefully inadequate. Duty-free and quota-free access to markets, aimed at spurring their investment and trade, has yet to materialize. Unless they have access to more resources and to open markets, the least developed countries — including Nepal and many African States — will fail to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the objectives of the Brussels Programme of Action.

The landlocked developing countries suffer from geographical handicaps, from an attendant lack of access to sea-based resources and from high transit-transport costs. That deprives them of many means of survival and of their comparative trade advantage. We fervently hope that implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action will receive full support from transit neighbours and development partners to ameliorate the difficulties of the landlocked developing countries.

The Barbados Programme of Action should be implemented with all seriousness to help the small island developing States to address their unique problems. Developing countries have long demanded a transformation in the international financial architecture to make it inherently fair and more representative and to enhance its legitimacy. Such a change is essential to give poor countries a voice in deciding their own destiny. It is a pity that not much has happened in that area so far.

A better world will continue to elude us if we fail to bring democracy, human rights, justice and good governance to ordinary people across the globe. Humanitarian assistance will continue to be a priority in helping vulnerable people at their moment of dire need. Nepal appreciates the fact that the United Nations has been promoting human rights, justice and good governance and has been providing humanitarian assistance throughout the world.

We support the United Nations in its endeavours to advance gender balance inside the Organization and outside in the global community. The tangible role of the United Nations as an advocate and promoter of justice and good governance in individual countries and in the wider world finds favour in my country. We feel acute pain whenever United Nations forums are used not for policy, but for politics, and it is dragged into unnecessary controversy.

The United Nations has won accolades as a key agency for humanitarian aid to needy people ravaged by wars, conflicts and calamities. It has worked strenuously to protect, maintain and repatriate refugees. Nepal profoundly praises the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other agencies for their help in looking after the nearly 100,000 Bhutanese refugees, and we encourage them to sustain their assistance until the refugees return to Bhutan.

A strong United Nations will be vital in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the other objectives of the Millennium Declaration. Therefore, Nepal welcomes the Secretary-General's proposal for reforms in the United Nations. We believe reform is a process rather than an event. Consistent efforts, therefore, will have to be made, not only to improve decision-making processes, but also the mechanisms for executing decisions.

For too long, we have focused on narrowing the agendas of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council as a way to reform these principal organs. This is indeed important. But these organs will not be able to develop the strong constituency crucial

to revamping them until their resolutions are properly implemented and make a difference in people's lives. This is where our emphasis should increasingly be in the days ahead.

Security Council reforms have been on the agenda of the international community for over a decade. While modest progress has been achieved in democratizing its work, the Council remains unrepresentative and outdated in its structure. Nepal calls on all nations to show flexibility and a spirit of accommodation, to remove the snags that have gotten in the way and frustrated our efforts for Security Council reform.

Finally, Nepal views in a positive light the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a high-level panel to suggest reforms. We believe the panel must be representative and reflect the diverse constituencies and interests that the world body has the obligation to address. While the panel should be free to formulate its own informed recommendations, it must engage in a transparent, open-ended and regular interface with Member States, who thus would not be surprised by any of the panel's recommendations. Only this will ensure the success of reforms.

The President: In accordance with the decision taken earlier at this meeting, I now call on the observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Migliore (Holy See): Mr. President, since this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor under your presidency, allow me to join the previous speakers in congratulating you and the other members of the Bureau.

When heads of State and Governments at the 2000 Millennium Summit committed themselves to reaching measurable targets by 2015, they were thinking of this not only as inspirational, but also as practically viable.

With 12 years remaining until that target year, my delegation reaffirms its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, believes in their practical viability as effective tools of political mobilization in favour of the marginalized and unites itself with the Secretary-General's call to "take a hard look at the existing 'architecture' of international institutions ..." (*A/58/323, para. 91*).

The struggle to reach the Millennium Development Goals is a struggle for the globalization of ethics, equity, inclusion, human security, sustainability and development. Such benefits can be delivered by market forces only if attention is paid to the preservation and enhancement of human, community and environmental resources. The efficiency of the international trade and financial systems should be measured by their effective contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Thus, the challenge is to find an effective framework of rules and institutions for stronger local, national, regional and global governance, to ensure that globalization works for the good of people and not just for profit.

The international community should refashion the existing ideas of political equality, social justice and liberty and redesign these into a coherent political project, robust enough for a world where power is exercised on a transnational scale and where risks are shared by peoples around the world.

When we speak of the Millennium Development Goals, we are addressing our immediate future and, thus, we are talking about children. Children are the most precious treasure, deserving of the utmost love and respect, and they are given to each generation as a challenge to its wisdom and humanity. The well-being of the world's children depends greatly on the measures taken by States to support and help families fulfil their natural life-giving and formative functions.

It is interesting to note that, in 1946, when the General Assembly created the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), its acronym was understood as the United Nations International Children's "Emergency" Fund. Despite the change in meaning, the same sense is now applicable in situations where children are not welcome, where their rights are trampled upon and their plight is to be abandoned. It is a real emergency that must be addressed quickly if we want to preserve society.

In this regard, my delegation reaffirms the central importance of education. Education, however, should not only entail knowledge of information but knowledge with a direction. While global media networks and satellite communications can promote transnational cultural diversity, they should also endeavour to safeguard cultural identities. National and indigenous cultures should flourish alongside foreign cultures.

The feminization of poverty and various historical forms of women's marginalization have deprived the human race of untold resources. A heartening response to this problem is the gradual

increase of women's participation in the formal labour market. Yet women's unpaid work hours remain high, and most nations' labour laws do not recognize the vital importance of work or care at home.

With the conditions necessary for peace so elusive, my delegation is profoundly concerned about security and terrorism. An unwanted side-effect of technological progress and economic globalization has been the dramatic increase of human trafficking, especially in women and children, spawning drug related crimes, triggering weapons trade and feeding street crime and civil strife. In areas affected by economic stagnation, structural adjustment programmes have led to the dismantling of State services.

Chronic environmental degradation is becoming today's silent emergency. The irrational exploitation of natural resources is resulting in less biodiversity and fewer forests. Unfortunately, most of the costs are borne by the poor, while the world's rich benefit the most.

My delegation appreciates, above all, that in putting flesh to the Millennium Development Goals, tireless efforts are being exerted by the United Nations system in guiding Governments, assisted by civil society, to set up mechanisms that make ethical standards and human rights binding for nations, corporations and individuals. In that manner, multilateral agreements help to establish global markets that are consistent with human development.

The Holy See understands that the Millennium Development Goals, noted for their preferential focus on the poor, are not a transitory target-driven goal but a permanent task and commitment. Those Goals are technically viable if every human being, who is the stakeholder and centre of those Goals, is also put at the centre of the economic thinking and of the architecture of all international organizations, including those dealing with finances and trade.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these items.

Our joint debate on item 10, "Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization", and item 60, "Follow-up of the outcome of the Millennium Summit", has been both interesting and wide-ranging. The 68 representatives participating in the debate, including on behalf of groups of States and regional organizations, indicates that the views of a wide cross section of Member States and organizations were reflected in the debate.

It was clear from the debate that the information provided by the Secretary-General in his reports on the Organization's work and on Millennium Summit follow-up, and his address of 23 September 2003, focused on the work of the Organization, were carefully reviewed and evaluated, so that comments on these two priority issues were succinct and cogent. I know that I speak for us all in thanking the Secretary-General for his reports and for his statement, which gave important orientation to our debate.

United Nations reform has come centre stage as one of the critical issues that the Organization must address, and, understandably, was among the issues given particular focus in the debate. Many commented on the reform issue in the context of the war in Iraq, contending that it severely tested the principle of collective security and the resilience of the United Nations. The Organization has, indeed, been sorely tested over the past year. Reform that can better position it to respond to serious challenges is an imperative, and was given widespread support.

Substantial comments were made on the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a high-level panel to make recommendations on United Nations reform. Already, Member States are giving consideration to the terms of reference of the panel, and to what they expect from it. The case was made that the panel's report should be a conceptual one, reflecting on the nature of changes occurring in the international system, and possible responses to those changes. Security risks related to globalization, development gaps, international solidarity and good governance were among the issues speakers expected the panel to take up.

A number of ideas were put forward on the matter of Security Council reform, indicating that this remains a priority issue, notwithstanding the fact that no comprehensive agreement has been reached over the past 10 years. It was contended by some that given the strategic importance of the Security Council, its reform should outweigh the single political agenda of any Member State. The view was also expressed that restarting the stalled reform process would prove that the United Nations is ready to adapt and adjust, and thereby, to uphold its authority in the world affairs.

Among the opinions expressed on the specific issue of Security Council membership, it was contended that Member States that wanted to, and could, shoulder global responsibility as permanent members of the Council should be considered for such membership. It was also emphasized that new geopolitical realities and better geographical representation on the Council were key issues for resolution.

Regarding revitalization of the General Assembly, there was broad agreement that further streamlining and consolidating of its agenda were critical, and a number of proposals were made in respect of approaches that might be taken. Our approach to resolutions of the Assembly was also the subject of some thought-provoking commentary. We were, in particular, invited to reflect on whether the way we traditionally introduce resolutions, sometimes with very few changes from year to year, serve their intended purpose or reflect the current situation, and whether the best way to influence the situation is to routinely request another report of the Secretary-General. It was proposed that we further consider bi- and tri-annualization of resolutions, discontinue some of our initiatives, or change their focus.

The importance of the General Assembly, as the main decision- and policy-making organ of the United Nations, compels us to give careful consideration to proposals such as those put forward in the debate. This is particularly important for me as President of the Assembly, since, as you know, revitalization of the Assembly is among my priorities, and is also essential to our critical tasks of implementation and follow-up decisions.

The debate also provided the opportunity for many to share perspectives on the need for an appropriate response to new and existing threats to international peace and security, such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. While there was broad support for the General Assembly's being actively involved in addressing these grave issues, it was emphasized that its initiatives in this area must take fully into account respect for human rights and for international law.

In the current global environment, it was to be expected that particular attention would be given to mobilizing global action against terrorism, and this was reflected in the debate of items 10 and 60. Multilateralism was cited as the most efficient weapon in the fight against terrorism. As with the approach to new and existing threats to international peace and security, it was the generally held view that the development of a long-term anti-terrorism strategy must be in strict conformity with the basic principles of the United Nations, including full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and international law. It was also stressed by many delegations that there could be no justification for linking any particular religion with terrorism. In that regard, the opinion was expressed that recent incidents in different parts of the world show that no religion is immune to terrorist attacks.

Attention was drawn to the illicit trade and transfer of small arms and light weapons, as matters of grave concern to developing countries, especially in Africa. Many delegations called for renewed commitment and action to prevent and control the movement of these weapons, because they exacerbate conflicts and political instability and have a serious impact on violent crime and criminality.

A broad approach to United Nations peacekeeping operations received support, with some making proposals for the improvement of the work done by the United Nations as part of these operations. The coordination of assistance and protection of civilians in armed conflict, provision of humanitarian assistance, disarmament and various aspects of development were among the issues addressed in this context.

Turning to the Millennium Summit and the Millennium Development Goals, a majority stressed that there was much work to be done to achieve the Goals. Attaining the Goals and meeting the targets agreed to in the Millennium Declaration was considered to be the shared responsibility of developed and developing countries alike. It was also the generally held view that a common effort had to be made to ensure that the Goals are the focus of national as well as global action.

Incessant calls were made for developed countries to meet the commitments they have made, particularly in the area of official development assistance, and for them to support a more equitable trading system. It was also emphasized that developing countries have a stake, and must participate in, international economic decision-making.

Before us for urgent consideration and action is the suggestion that donor countries work towards an agreement among themselves on a set of deadlines for

more equitable trade, debt relief and to meet their official development assistance commitments, in order to achieve the eighth Millennium Development Goal. It is also before us for consideration that a universal reporting system be established for donor countries on progress made in achieving that objective.

It was suggested that developing countries give direction to processes set out in the Millennium Development Goals by assigning their own priorities, elaborating appropriate strategies and focusing on the effective implementation of poverty-reduction policies. The opinion was expressed that good governance is an important underpinning for initiatives in this area.

The Monterrey Consensus, adopted by the International Conference on Financing for Development, supports a framework of mutual obligations and mutual accountability, to which all States are committed. The High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development, scheduled for 29-30 October 2003, is an important event for refocusing attention on the commitments made at Monterrey and maintaining the impetus in this area. We have an obligation — Member States and international agencies alike — to ensure that the High-level dialogue proceeds as envisaged by heads of State and Government at Monterrey, and in the resolution of the General Assembly on the convening of the Dialogue. Therefore, support expressed for the Dialogue should translate into high-level participation from capitals and agencies.

The debate pointed to some joint efforts that are being made that would enhance prospects for achieving real progress in realizing the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals. It has been noted in that respect that the Group of 77 and China has established a multiyear programme of work — 2004 to 2017 — in order to maintain the momentum of commitments made last year at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. This emphasizes the priority given to the Johannesburg outcome as a blueprint for the achievement of the sustainable development goals. Initiatives such as this are essential for translating the provisions of the General Assembly's resolution on the integrated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits into reality.

The Group of 77's initiative should also buttress our efforts to ensure that the 2005 major event will lead to the timely achievement of the Development Goals. Support has been expressed for that major event, in the hope that it will provide new political impetus to achieve the goals set by the Millennium Declaration and at major United Nations summits and conferences. The hope was expressed, as well, that the event would also give impetus to the reform of the United Nations.

We have had a full and fruitful discussion, and I have taken this opportunity to share my views with the Assembly on the salient issues raised in our deliberations. But we cannot leave it here. I would urge all to reflect on the comments and proposals made, and, where these require further consideration and action that would enhance our shared endeavours, to act accordingly.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization contained in document A/58/1?

It was so decided.

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda items 10 and 60.

The meeting rose at 1.35 p.m.